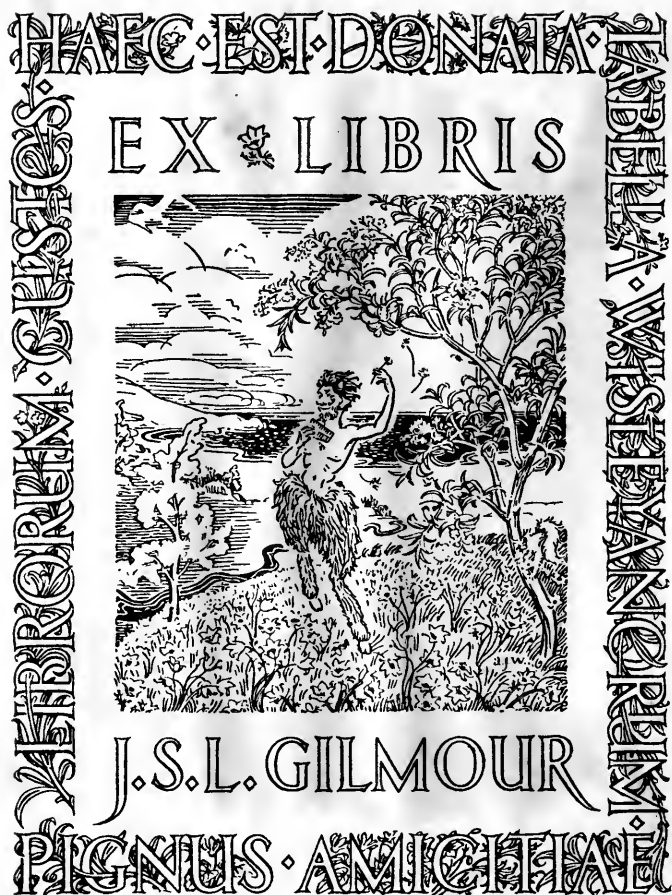


J. H. Hamlin



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THE
ORACLE OF REASON :

Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

“FAITH’S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE.”

VOLUME II.

LONDON :

WILLIAM CHILTON, 40, HOLYWELL-STREET, STRAND.

1843.

PREFACE.

As an original proprietor with SOUTHWELL of the *Oracle*, during its publication in Bristol, and from the circumstance of every number in the two volumes having been printed under my superintendence, I am enabled to state its history with some degree of accuracy, and this I purpose doing as briefly as possible, before I close this volume, and my little favourite is numbered with the things that have been.

When the *Oracle* first appeared it sold very well, in fact, the sale was extraordinary—the numbers to 6 or 7 averaging 4000. After the publication in Bristol of No. 7, circumstances rendered it necessary to change the scene of operations, and I removed to London, there to continue the work. The precise time of my arrival in London, I cannot now recollect, but a clear month elapsed before No. 8 appeared, three weeks of which were passed by M. Q. RYALL and myself in looking for some one who would print the work—no share in the responsibility, or risk, being asked of the printer. We succeeded at last, and much to our satisfaction—for we not only found a man who undertook the work without hesitation, but to moderate charges added numerous acts of kindness and many indulgencies. From 8 to 21, both inclusive, the whole trouble and expense of the publication were borne by M. Q. RYALL and myself—the *Oracle* never having paid its expenses after No. 7. The greatest proportion of the loss fell upon my friend R., from the fact of his having more to lose than myself. R. had pledged himself to SOUTHWELL, before S. went to prison, not to allow the *Oracle* to drop, but to continue it until S. was able to resume its direction. From this promise no interested consideration could withdraw him—to its accomplishment, and in spreading and organising the agitation consequent upon SOUTHWELL'S prosecution, he deliberately sacrificed a lucrative profession, and expended, besides, a large sum of money, procured for the purpose. These losses, together with others sustained in Holywell-street, during the “Placard War,” have reduced him from a state of easy competence to a position of great difficulty and anxiety. His disinterestedness all who know him readily admit—and if they think him imprudent, they may regret, but dare not blame. Had all done their duty, he could not have injured himself, but failing this, he made himself a ransom for the sins of others—and I can never too warmly record my gratitude for his conduct, or too highly esteem his generous devotion.

A printer, a friend of SOUTHWELL'S undertook the printing of the *Oracle*, after the 21st number, at his own risk, until S. was liberated—and he continued it until the 65th number, when SOUTHWELL having determined to bring out the *Investigator*, the *Oracle* was in danger of dropping, and would most probably have soon ceased to exist, but that W. J. B., who some time previously had become a contributor to its pages, offered to make good the weekly deficiency until the end of the second volume—and thus, *unassisted*, he has expended upwards of £40.

Why it was wished and determined to continue the *Oracle* until the end of the second volume, may be thus briefly stated. When SOUTHWELL went to prison, his friends were anxious to prevent the real object of his prosecution taking effect, namely, the destruction of the publication which promulgated such unpalatable doctrines—and they also wished to preserve him a medium for the publication of his opinions when he should

be again at liberty. Some weeks after the completion of the first volume, SOUTHWELL left his dungeon, and then, for the first time, his friends learnt his intention of bringing out the *Investigator*. We were now placed in a dilemma. By continuing the *Oracle* after the first volume, we had tacitly pledged ourselves to bring out at least another volume—and we should not have continued it beyond the first volume, but for the opinion that SOUTHWELL would resume the editorship when he was at liberty. We had hoped, under the superintendence of SOUTHWELL, the *Oracle* would again arrive at a paying circulation, and the printer, by this means, be remunerated for the loss which he had been sustaining—but the bringing out of the *Investigator* frustrated our projects, and rendered the further publication of the *Oracle* impossible, unless the weekly loss could be made good to the printer. At this crisis, W. J. B. stepped forward, and by his generous assistance enabled us to perform our implied engagement to some 700 subscribers, who had continued with us from the first, and also, for some forty weeks longer, to carry on the war as vigorously and as undauntedly as ever. Such conduct requires no comment from me, and I leave it alone in its glory.

With the exception of W. J. B., the whole of the individuals connected with the *Oracle* are depending on their own exertions for support. There has never been a farthing received from the paper by any one of us—and the expences of postage, stationery, etc., the cost of which would not be credited by parties unaware of our peculiar position, have been defrayed by ourselves out of our weekly earnings. None of us ever engaged in the work in the hope of gain, after SOUTHWELL went to prison—in Bristol, of course, it was partly a commercial speculation—but we ought to have been preserved from pecuniary loss.

In giving the editorial history of the *Oracle*, I shall state an important principle, in fact, a main feature of the work—the publication of the editor's name. SOUTHWELL, whom I met in Bristol for the first time, where he was appointed social lecturer, and with whom I had many conversations upon our peculiar opinions, often regretted that there was no publication in existence, nor ever had been, advocating and defending unqualified atheism. SOUTHWELL, in a conversation with Mr. FIELD, a member of the Bristol branch, mentioned the circumstance, when FIELD proposed that he and SOUTHWELL, in conjunction with myself, should form a partnership, and bring out such a paper. FIELD was an engraver, and I was a compositor. FIELD was to furnish appropriate engravings, I was to print the paper, and SOUTHWELL was to provide copy—thus commenced the *Oracle of Reason* in Bristol. It was well known that the publication of atheism would not be permitted to proceed, unmolested, by the powers “appointed of god”—and it was also well known, from past experience, that unless atheism was publicly avowed, and undauntedly defended, atheists would *never* be allowed the liberty of expression enjoyed by other heterodox parties. To write atheism, and give it to the world, leaving the publishers of the work to take the consequences, as had heretofore been done by persons advocating less heterodox notions, was deemed dishonourable to our cause. The idea of subterfuge or secrecy—the use of fictitious names, or no names at all, was rejected as puerile and unworthy of an advocate of freedom of expression. The writer of the obnoxious articles was considered to be the only party who ought to suffer for the publication of such articles, if any sacrifice was required—and not the mere vendor, who could no more, in justice, be held responsible by the orthodox for the dissemination of heterodoxy, than he could by the heterodox for the dissemination of orthodoxy.

SOUTHWELL, when he started the *Oracle* declared his willingness to meet the consequences of such a step, and when it resulted as he had anticipated, he did meet them, without shrinking or murmuring. He felt assured, that unless bad laws were disobeyed, they never would be abolished, and that without a sacrifice upon the altar of bigotry, superstition and tyranny would ever be triumphant. He set an example which others were not slow to follow. On the 15th of January, 1842, he was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment in Bristol Gaol, and to pay a fine of £100, which was subsequently reduced to £50.

During SOUTHWELL'S imprisonment, whilst waiting for the magistrates to take bail, he directed me to write to GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE, and request him to undertake the editorship until he (S.) should be again at liberty. HOLYOAKE and myself were, at that time, perfect strangers to each other, but quickly became acquainted. With some diffidence on the score of ability, but without the slightest fear of legal consequences, G. J. H. undertook the responsibility and duty of editor. His letters upon the subject are so characteristic, that I make a couple of extracts. In reply to my second letter to him, he says, “Who must be editor—I? Put my name on, if you see fit. S. and I are, as Hamlet said, ‘Hyperion to a satyr,’ and the *Oracle* will speak it—which is a pity. But *necessity*, like charity, covereth a multitude of sins—and in my

case it must. Personally I could cheerfully frame and glaze the difference between me and S., because the world would more easily see how to appreciate my friend's better and brighter qualities. But the *Oracle* is his reputation, and that no man should play with—I fear to impair it.” Again, “In the event that I edit the *Oracle*, procure good things from any quarter you can, and if any persons ask who is responsible—*send them to me*. I will answer for whatever appears. The first page, which now says, ‘Edited by Charles Southwell,’ I would have *Edited by one without a god*—and also directed that all communication to be made to G. J. Holyoake, 179, Broomhall-street, Sheffield.” Such self-devotion cannot be too highly appreciated—SOUTHWELL was single, HOLYOAKE was married, and had “given hostages to fortune.” SOUTHWELL's liberation on bail rendered it unnecessary for HOLYOAKE to undertake the editorship until after S.'s trial and conviction—when, in conformity with his promise, he appended his name to, and it appeared on the 8th number of, the publication. Shortly after, he went to Bristol, on a visit to S., and delivered a lecture at Cheltenham, on “Home Colonies,” at the conclusion of which, in the course of an answer to a question put to him, remarked that he would place “god upon half-pay.” For this, upon his return to Cheltenham from Bristol, he was arrested, and on the 15th August, 1843, brought to trial at Gloucester—convicted—and sentenced to six months' imprisonment in the county gaol.

No. 37 appeared with THOMAS PATERSON's name as editor. PATERSON was a personal friend of HOLYOAKE, and had acted as his school-assistant, or “curate,” as H. facetiously termed him, during H.'s residence in Sheffield, as authorised lecturer of the social body. PATERSON was then quite unknown, but he did not long remain so—for the spirited fusillade which he commenced in Holywell-street against the god-mania and godmongery, soon brought him into notice. When PATERSON went to Tothill-fields prison for a month, it was not thought necessary to procure another editor for the time, in fact, it was insisted upon by PATERSON, that neither myself nor RYALL should take the post of danger, for the imprisonment of either one of us would materially have interfered with our plan of operation—and, of course, HOLYOAKE, not out of prison, could not be thought of.

PATERSON continued to be editor until No. 86, when he removed to Edinburgh, with the intention of carrying on Robinson's shop in the event of his imprisonment. I was then induced, with the sanction of my friends, to undertake the editorship. I have passed through the ordeal unscathed, thanks to the sufferings of my friends, which had satisfied the authorities of *this* country that persecution for opinion's sake must ever fail of its object. Oppression spurs men on to freedom—its necessity might be deplored, but its utility cannot be questioned. Force and fraud work their own cure. “The dull ass will not mend its pace by beating,” says the proverb—the dull *ass* may not, but dull *men* will, and do, or I am much mistaken. I pray the dullards “over the border” may be pushed on to as vigorous a resistance of the powers “appointed of god,” as have their brethren of England, and no question but as happy a result will be the consequence.

One only circumstance remains to be recorded, to make my history complete. It will be asked who are the individuals that have carried on the *Oracle* from its commencement, until its conclusion? Here are their names: C. SOUTHWELL, G. J. HOLYOAKE, M. Q. RYALL, T. PATERSON, W. J. B., and W. CHILTON.

Excepting with a few, the value of our proceedings have been cordially acknowledged, and the appreciation of the bold and truthful, for whom we laboured, has been so cordial, that it is a glorious satisfaction to reflect on the past. The *Oracle* has given atheism a local habitation and a name among the working classes. It has disseminated its principles in the chief towns of the nation, and determined numbers to the side of open and uncompromising opposition to religion. To the modern victims of blasphemy laws, it has been a shield of protection—and, lastly, there is the gratifying prospect that the prime features of its philosophy, the frankness of its tone, and the integrity of its intentions, are descending, with new graces, to the pages of the *Movement*

Dec., 1843.


W. CHILTON.

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 NOTICE.—The Editor has transferred to the conductors of the *Movement* all communications in his possession at the close of the second volume.

THE
ORACLE OF REASON:
Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE"

EDITED BY THOMAS PATERSON.

No. 53.] *Originally Edited by CHARLES SOUTHWELL, sentenced, on January 15, 1842, to Twelve Months' Imprisonment in Bristol Gaol, and to pay a fine of £100, [PRICE 1D. for Blasphemy, contained in No. 4.*
Second Editor, G. J. HOLYOAKE, sentenced, on August 15, 1842, to Six Months' Imprisonment in Gloucester Gaol, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.

TO OUR READERS.

Now, by Saint Paul, the work goes bravely on.

PRIESTS of *all* our *true* religions are frightened and furious. They display the curiously complex feelings of gaunt wolves and startled fawns. Their rage is born of fear—fear of that truth which *will* set men free. They hate reason. They detest those who proclaim, or dare listen to its oracles,

And doom them to the zealots ever ready hell,
Which answers to all doubts so eloquently well.

No less bitter fruit can be hoped for from *such* a tree. The fury of the priest follows as naturally the flash of reason, as the thunderclap its parent lightning. Nothing can be *more* natural. It is natural for a sudden rush of electric fluid through the air to make a noise. It is just as natural for priests to abhor and dread *Oracles of Reason*. Let us, however, do justice to these holy men. They can't help being as they are, and what they are. "Their characters were formed *for*, and not *by* them," and how can it reasonably be expected that they should feel the foundations of their very existence as priests shake beneath their feet, and not be filled with the rage of despair against those worse than Titans, who are at the bottom of such unfathomable mischiefs? Though priests, they are still men, having *some* human feelings — though *soi disant* stewards and ministers of godly mysteries, they cannot be expected to part with honours, power, and pelf, without a struggle.

Oh take my life and all, pardon not that:
You take my house, when you do take the prop
That doth sustain my house; you take my life,
When you do take the means whereby I live.

Thus did old *Shylock*, when cheated of the "pound of flesh," pathetically appeal to his judge. Now, *god belief* is **THE** prop that doth sustain the house of priestcraft. Houses *sans* props could only be sustained by miracles, such as the apostles used to work, but which, unluckily, their present successors can't make a job of. Then, with the *prop*, that is *god belief*, go the *means*, that is the *monish*,

1—VOL. II.

by which priests live. Holy men, from popes to country parsons, must have "means whereby to live," or be hurried "into the presence of their maker," long before they have the slightest desire for his company. We never knew a priest too holy to eat, drink, and sleep. The short is, they have bellies to be filled, backs to be clad, and no less of pride to satisfy than mere mortals. "The pulse of ambition," said Lord Grey, to our bishops, "beats as high under lawn-sleeves as any other habit." No doubt of it, my Lord Grey, quite as high. 'Twere vain to expect that men, with such a load of "imperfections on their heads," should, with more than the firmness of a Cato, coolly "gape on," and see the enemies of religion hammer away at the prop, and snatch, as it were, from between their priestly teeth, the means by which they now live in clover, with the superaddition of certain hope of better livings by and by.

That *god-belief* has had a shaking it never can recover from, is a fact nobody can be hardy enough to dispute. Priestcraft is, indeed, tottering to its fall. Nothing can save it. Down it must come, the question being, thanks to *Ages* and *Oracles of Reason*, merely *one of time*. The progress of radical truth has been immense during the last twelve months. That *we* have mainly contributed to the mighty movement, is not too much to affirm. Our acts speak for us, trumpet-tongued.

With statecraft, or political delusion, as a *distinct question*, our first volume has scarce at all meddled. It is now high time *statecraft* should have a fair share of attention.

The government of this country is essentially and rottenly aristocratic. A score or two of *noble* families, including such scions as the Huntingtowers, Chesterfields, and Hertforts, rule with iron rod, through the instrumentality of priests. Priests are, at this hour, in every nation of Europe, the convenient, the indispensable cat's-paw of tyranny. In our land of liberty, the envy of surrounding nations, and admiration of the world, that most contemptible species of priests, 'yclept parsons, are the true conservators of crime and oppression. They are

kept, liveried, pampered, despised, and honored, by the prime movers of our state machine, to systematically corrupt the people's morals. This they do most willingly, not as they say, "for Jesus Christ's sake," but for their *own* sakes. Venders of incomprehensible absurdities, and literally sharpeners by profession, they nourish in the minds of their dupes those very vices they *pretend* to extirpate. They laud christianity, upon the same principle that men who move the pea, would, if permitted, laud thimble-riggery. Can men who live by cheating common-sense, to whom fraud is as the breath of their nostrils—can *such* men be expected to endure *Oracles of Reason*, or suffer, without a desperate struggle, their measureless rascality to be exposed, and power, wealth, honors, all that soothes the vanity or charms the intellect, to melt from their grasp? No, they are, consistently enough, the sworn enemies of reason and liberty. Why, we should as soon expect the moon to pay our earth a complimentary visit, as priests or parsons to turn lovers or patronisers of truth. Truth will destroy *them*, is it amazing that they should try to destroy *truth*?

Religion, or superstition (for they are convertible terms), is, we repeat, the craft by which liberty is destroyed, and priests live. "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," shouted the silver-smiths of Ephesus, who profited by the worship of idols, and the mob of fools echoed them, crying, they hardly knew why, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." "Great is Jehovah of the Jews," cry our no less cunning theological smithies, and reasonless rabbles, being pretty much the same in all ages and countries—*ours* roar no less loud than their prototypes of Ephesus, "Great is Jehovah of the Jews."

Reason wont pay, and nothing drowns reason better than riot. The pains high-church parsons have taken to stir up good christian riots is well known. Atheism has a strong tendency to *cool* this riotous spirit, for an Atheist must think; hence, then, hatred of atheism, hence the malice, fierce, and not always impotent rage, they have manifested towards all god rejectors; hence their late crusade against the *Oracle of Reason*, under cover of an attack upon its editors. Southwell and Holyoake might have scribbled their nails off in favour of deism, or any other delusion, without being disturbed or punished. No, no, it is neither deism nor theism, but uncompromising atheism priests dread.

We have been told, "the Atheist helps the priest, and the priest helps the Atheist," which is quite true. At least, it is quite true that the Atheist helps the priest, he helps him precisely as Cuvorsier helped Lord William Russell. If any other less questionable kind of help is furnished by

Atheists to priests, the latter must be strangely ungrateful; for it is surely natural, that even *they* should like those who do them such essential service. No such thing, however, they don't fancy them a bit, and like certain cruel giants of whom we read in "Tom Thumb," and other voracious histories, would

Grind their bones to make their bread,

if they had a mill with other indispensable conveniences.

Some priests, it is notorious, have such a horror of Atheists, that, strange to say, they wont allow there are or can be any; elassing all to be found in books about such imaginary monsters, with the fabulous histories of griffins, sphinxes, and centaurs. David Hume has amusingly observed, that "there is not a greater number of philosophical reasonings displayed upon any subject than those to prove the existence of a deity, and refute the fallacies of Atheists; and yet the most religious philosophers still dispute whether any man can be so blinded as to be a speculative Atheist." How shall we reconcile these contradictions? The knights-errant, who wandered about to clear the world of dragons and giants, never entertained the least doubt concerning their existence.

If we could reconcile these contradictions, this introduction is not a fitting place to achieve the task—but the fact is, having no special gifts, the whole business is quite out of our line, and must, as far as we are concerned, be ranked among the *impossibles*. It does certainly appear very like out Quixoting Quixote, when *religious philosophers* fight like Trojans against imaginary armies, and make the fiercest imaginable onslaughts upon a vast number of people who never existed. In one of Dryden's worst written plays, a love sick lady is made to exclaim, "My wound is great, because it is so small." "Then (said the Duke of Buckingham, who was present at its first and only representation) 'twould be greater, were it none at all."

Now, upon the principle that a thing or a mischief is great *because it is so small*, and infinitely greater *when none at all*, the rabid intolerance of certain religious and semi-infidel philosophers, who make such a fuss about the madness of Atheists, while denying their existence, admits of an easy and satisfactory elucidation.

It does appear to us, however, that the first volume of reason's oracles has left all doubters of the actuality of Atheists without excuse. That there are *bona fide* rejectors of every imaginable goddism, even the sceptical Mackintosh allows to be a fact. He is *now* quite convinced that those who conduct the *Oracle*, will no more accept *Mr. Power*

for god, than those "strange characters," Messieurs Jupiter and Jehovah. Having convinced Mr. Mackintosh, we despair not of convincing all other goddites with the "speed of flames," if they are not already quite satisfied upon the subject.

The state of our columns warns us that we have written enough and to spare. No prudent persons ever dream of penning long "Introductions." Like our gracious queen's speeches, they should neither be *too promising*, nor *too long*, for it is easier to promise than to pay, and length, unless shortened by much wit and learning, begets lassitude. Our learning we believe is of the right sort, though modesty forbid that we say much about it—but, as to our wit, like christian charity, it is unfortunately down at zero.

We pass our evenings in *dull dungeons* solely,
And that is why we are so melancholy.

Under such circumstances, brevity will "cover a multitude of sins"—so, by way of *finale*, we will venture to predict, that if our *first* volume dealt a heavy blow at superstition, our *second* will deal a heavier—if *that* put priests into choler, *this* will infallibly plunge them into more choler.

SUPERNATURALISM,

CONSIDERED AS A QUESTION OF MORAL INFLUENCE.

I.

MANY sceptical, as well as heathen and christian writers, have contended that belief in supernatural agency exercises a very salutary influence upon human conduct. Some of these writers have boldly affirmed that such belief, if not sound, is useful—if not reasonable, is at least essential to the peace and prosperity of nations. By sophists of this stamp, it is usually objected to atheism, that, even though admitted rational, it is a species of rationality extremely dangerous to society—so dangerous, indeed, that could it be distinctly proved, there is no god, wise politicians would feign ignorance of so mischievous a fact, and, for their own good, teach the vulgar, as an eternal truth, the opposing falsehood.

Not a few distinguished philosophers have gone so far as to allow that religion is always an evil, but then, say they—a necessary evil. They freely admit religion, in its mildest and least offensive form, to be an excrescence on man's moral nature—an excrescence, however, not to be lopped off, without dangerous, nay, fatal, results. "If (demanded Franklin of Paine) men are so bad *with* religion, what would they be *without* it?" Christians, especially *political*

christians, quote the query with much glee, as though quite satisfied no reply is possible, and therefore, oh, glorious triumph! even religion haters must acknowledge, that, whether true or false, religion of some kind is essential to human happiness—nay, that without its threatenings, sanctions, and grotesque mummeries, society cannot even approximate to a state of virtue and contentment.

Being myself entirely of opinion with John Adams, one of America's wisest presidents, that "this would be the best of all possible worlds, if there was no religion in it"—I at once say, in answer to this notable question, if we infer from the terms of it, as we are without doubt constrained to do, that because human beings, trained under religious influences are *exceedingly* wicked, it follows, if no such influences had been allowed to operate upon them, they must have been *much worse*—I do most decidedly demur to so flagrantly absurd an inference. What! are the very mischiefs, which religion itself has been the prime, if not the *sole*, agent in producing, to be cited in proof of religion's efficacy—nay, its indispensability to our moral existence. Are we indeed to be gravely told, that the unspeakable horrors, the nameless as well as numberless crimes, which, if they did not take root in, at least flourish rankly luxuriant under the shadow of christianity's divine dispensation—are we, I ask, to be impudently told, that these very horrors and crimes are so many witnesses of the excellent, the indispensable nature of religion? If such results, as every man who opens his eyes cannot fail to witness in our corrupt state of existence, falsely called society, are to be paraded as "confirmation strong" of the destructive character of irreligious principles, why then christians may justly boast of the superlative excellence of christianity.

Surely that must be an outrageous reasoner, who contends that a nation, trained under religious influences, being a very immoral nation, it follows another people, trained under irreligious, or directly opposing influences, must become *more* immoral. How can the non success, the absolute and most miserable failure of all religious teaching be twisted into an argument *favorable* to religious teaching? Suppose a village doctor were known to have killed two-thirds of his patients, and half-killed the remaining third, would that prove his physic good—or would it prove his patients must have been *worse* without it? And what should be said to the modesty of such a wholesale poisoner, if he turned round upon the complaining remnant of his victims, with a smirking self-sufficient air, and said, "Oh, my good friends, the ways of providence are inscrutable, and the decrees of heaven none can resist. But you are, as appears from your

complaints of my treatment, grossly deceived by wicked, unscrupulous men, who, because two-thirds of my patients *happened to die*, and none of you, still under my treatment, are *quite sound*, falsely say it is all in consequence of my physic. But take my word for it, all such vulgar people say is a foul libel on my professional character—for it is certain, those who died under my treatment must have died under *any* treatment, and though it cannot be denied you, who have been providentially spared, are all horribly bad *with* my physic, yet, do but consider how would you have been *without* it."

The analogy between this imaginary doctor of the body, and our too real doctors of the soul, is by no means far-fetched or forced. *He* draws an argument in favour of his physic from the very mischiefs it has produced. *They* draw an argument in support of their religion, their *moral physic*, from the very same source.

How excessive must be the credulity, and how contemptible the intellect, of a people who suffer themselves to be imposed upon by a pack of reckless impostors and honest idiots—who, in defence of what they call the moralising influence of religion, have the effrontery or folly to parade such silly quackish sophisms as this we have exposed.

Continually dropping water wears away flint (according to the proverb), and well do priests understand the principle. They have always understood, and never better than at this moment, the peculiar value of *repetition*. Their wonderful success in moulding human nature to their will, is the result of sheer industry and impudence. The old man of the sea, stuck not closer to poor Sinbad's shoulders, than do the priests of *civilised* Europe to the consciences and tithes of the common people. To crush reason, and to exalt what they call faith, is the prime object of their unceasing labours—and so successful have they been in this peculiarly christian work, that nothing is more rare than common sense. A large majority of our labouring population, *said* to be the most intelligent in the world, would readily believe "rainbows the fiddlesticks of the fiddle of heaven," or any other monstrous absurdity, if told to do so by priests. Were such tag-rag and bobtail to take just views, to reflect patiently, and judge soundly, especially upon questions of a religious character, we should feel as much surprised as though a man, blind from his infancy, did suddenly open his eyes, or a dead man get up and walk away with his coffin. The "German Jew" very well observes, in his "Existence of Christ Disproved," that priests as naturally prey upon such dupes, as worms do upon dead bodies.

We cannot, therefore, feel astonishment that popular feeling and opinion is in all

countries favourable to supernaturalism. Religion, in some shape or other, is everywhere fancied to be a marvellous blessing, even by those who suffer most under its withering influence. They madly hug the scorpion which consumes them. Among these mad huggers must be included almost all *modern* philosophers, but decidedly the most able of supernaturalism's apologists was Voltaire, who wrote most strenuously against atheism, on the ground that belief in a god is necessary, or, at least, *useful*. Though himself a sincere Theist, he took no great pains to confute the philosophy of Atheists. He wrote incessantly about the *consequences*. The following lines, which we should only spoil by attempting to turn into English, clearly show, that whatever may have been Voltaire's doubts as to the *rationality* of a belief in god, he had none whatever as to its *utility*.

Consulte Zoroastre, et Minos, et Solon,
Et le sage Socrate, et le grand Ciceron :
Ils ont adoré tons au maître, un juge, un père ;
Ce système sublime à l'homme est nécessaire.
C'est le sacré lien de la société,
Le premier fondement de la sainte équité ;
Le frein du scélérat, l'espérance du juste.
Si les ciux, deponillés de leur empreinte auguste,
Pouvoient casser jamais de le manifester,
Si dieu n'existoit pas il, faudroit l'inventer.

These lines are quoted by Dugald Stewart, as enforcing "some of the sublimest sentiments anywhere to be found, both of religion and of morality." We are not judges of religious sublimity, but the morality of *inventing* a god, if no god existed, is, to my thinking, very questionable. A lie, however politic or indispensable, can never reach the dignity of a "sublime sentiment," and to say with Voltaire, "Dieu n'existoit pas, il faudroit l'inventer," is but declaring, in other words—the god-belief is so useful, so undowithoutable, in fact, that *if proved a lie, it must be taught as a truth*. It must be allowed to the Voltaire school of philosophers, that a *useful lie* is better than a *pernicious truth*; and *good deception* than *bad sincerity*. But it has not yet been shown, that lies or deception of any kind have been, are, or are likely to be as beneficial to society, as the universal or even general practice of *resolute truth*, and *undeviating sincerity* would be. When we speak of the Voltaire school of philosophers, we mean those writers, whether christian or Infidel, who hold the fatal doctrine, *the worst of all fallacies*, that men are only to be well governed through their fears. This horrid doctrine is not exactly expressed, but must be inferred from the lines above quoted, for why, if a god exists not, is one to be *invented*, if not upon the old boggy principle of frightening men into the practice of virtue? Archbp. Tillotson says, in one of his sermons,

that "The being of god is so *comfortable*, so *convenient*, so *necessary* to the felicity of mankind, that (as Tully admirably remarks) 'Dii immortales ad usum hominum fabricati pene videantur.' If god were not a necessary being of himself, he might almost be said to be made for the *use* and *benefit* of man." Such is the philosophy of christians. God is so very *necessary*, *useful*, and *beneficial* a being, and the belief therein is so *comfortable*, *convenient*, and *indispensable*, that if he were *not* a necessary being, why nothing can be more profitable than to consider him *bona-fide* as cut and dried, on purpose for our use. But a sleepy inactive god would be neither useful nor ornamental—such a god, for example, as the Epicureans affected to believe, who never meddled with or troubled himself at all about human affairs, allowing persons and things to go to the devil their own road. Such a god don't satisfy christians. *Theirs* is a *rewarding* and *punishing* deity; a lord who crieth, vengeance is mine—who gathers the wheat (the good) into his garner (heaven), and burns, or will burn up, the chaff (shocking Infidels), with unquenchable fire. Such a god may be *convenient* and even *necessary*—but we can't help thinking far from *comfortable* or *moralising*.

LYNCH LAW IN ENGLAND.

"OUR SHOP"—A CHRISTIAN RUFFIAN—AND A CHRISTIAN JUSTICE.

THE last number of the first volume of this work, contained a notice of a recent attempt on the part of the police authorities of Bow-street, to inflict a fine upon the editor, for the exposure of a "certain profane paper," in the window of "our shop," in Holywell-street—and in the first number of the second volume, I have to draw the attention of its readers to a violent outrage upon the said shop by one of the aristocracy, the son of one of the highest law administrators in the kingdom—the Vice-Chancellor—and, also, to the conduct of the magistrate before whom the delinquent was examined. The following is an account of the circumstances, copied from the *Times*, of Wednesday, December 14:—

BOW-STREET POLICE OFFICE.

(From the *Times*.)

Yesterday, a young man of gentlemanly appearance and address, named Lewis Knight Bruce, and who, it was said, was the son of Sir James Knight Bruce, the Vice-Chancellor, was placed at the bar before Mr. Jardine, charged with having wilfully broken two squares of glass, value 4s. each, in a

window in Holywell-street, Strand, under the following extraordinary circumstances:—

George Clarke, an errand-boy in the service of a person named Paterson, whose house in the above-named street has of late become somewhat notorious, in consequence of certain blasphemous placards being exhibited in the shop-window, stated that he was inside the shop about one o'clock in the day, in the act of serving a customer, when he saw the defendant standing outside and smearing the glass with dirt, which he picked off the street with his stick. He instantly went out to desire him to desist, when he smashed one of the panes, against which a paper was exhibited, with the stick he held in his hand, and then took out the paper, at the same time telling witness to remove another placard from another part of the window, or he would smash that also.

The defendant here said he unfortunately did not succeed in possessing himself of the second placard.

Witness then took the second paper from the window, which the defendant tried to snatch from him, but did not succeed, and tracing him to a pastry-cook shop in the Strand, he called a constable and gave him into custody.

The defendant said, he had merely retired to the pastrycook's to give a gentleman some refreshment who had expressed his disgust at the abominable exhibition.

Witness, in continuation, said his master was from home at the time, and the defendant told him, if he (witness) was a little taller, he would smash him with his stick. Each pane was worth 4s., which was the price paid for them when they were broken on a former occasion.

Pierce Rice, a fruit-seller, 52, Holywell-street, proved he saw a mob round the opposite window, in consequence of the defendant talking about the blasphemous placards, which he said he would have taken down; but upon the last witness saying his master was not at home, the defendant said, "Then I shall take them out myself," at the same time lifting up his stick. He then deliberately gave the window a good tap, so as to break it, without, however, doing any further injury; and having torn down the placard, he handed it to another person in the street, which the defendant subsequently tore up. After remaining for some time asking for the police, that the boy might give him in charge, as no constable was at hand, he walked away into the Strand. The boy accordingly followed to look for a constable, and witness having seen the occurrence, he thought it his duty to come forward and give evidence.

The defendant said he would feel much obliged if the magistrate would read the placard.

The chief clerk, having placed the fragments together, laid them on the bench for the magistrate's inspection.

The defendant assured the court that the contents of it were mild, compared with the others which were exhibited in the other parts of the window and in the interior of the shop, for they were of such an

awful character as to make the hair stand on end of any person who read them. He was actuated by a laudable disgust in the part he had taken in the matter, and he had no hesitation in declaring he would have thrashed the master of the house had he met with him. He was glad at what had happened, as it would bring the matter to an issue, and particularly as he saw some poor ignorant persons drinking in the putrefaction—yes, it could be called nothing but a horrible putrefaction; and he considered he was but doing a duty he owed to the public in destroying such exhibitions. He was passing by chance on his way to his father's, and not being able to restrain his feelings before he committed the act, he was not prepared with any witness. Whatever the damage was he would willing pay, if the court thought proper; but he would again assure the magistrate that the placard produced was holy and righteous compared with the others that still remained in the shop.

Mr. Jardine, having read the placard, said he was not at all surprised at the course the defendant had taken, and for which every excuse might be made. He was exceedingly glad Mr. Bruce had acted in such a manner, because it helped to bring the matter immediately into court, for which the public ought to thank him, as through him there would be no difficulty in bringing the case home to the parties who published such placards. He hoped Mr. Bruce would have no objection to lend his assistance in following up the prosecution, and for what he had done he would inflict no fine, but direct that he would pay for the damage he had done.

The following is a copy of the placard :—

“That revoltingly odious Jew production, called bible, has been for ages the idol of all sorts of blockheads, the glory of knaves, and the disgust of wise men. It is a history of lust, sodomies, wholesale slaughterings, and horrible depravity, that the vilest parts of all other histories collected into one monstrous book could scarcely parallel. Priests tell us that this concentration of abominations was written by a god; all the world believe priests, or they would rather have thought it the out-pourings of some devil!”—See *Oracle of Reason*.

Mr. Bruce having paid for the damage, said he would at any time gladly come forward and give his evidence, should the proper authorities take up the matter, and having thanked the magistrate, he left the court.

The above is a fine specimen of the *spirit* of christianity, and beautifully illustrative of English law. A *gentlemanly* ruffian breaks a tradesman's windows, *steals* his property, and openly declares, in what should be a court of *justice*, that he is sorry that he could not wreak his vengeance upon the proprietor—and the magistrate, paid to administer justice, applauds the act, and tells the prisoner he was “*exceedingly glad*” he *had acted in such a manner*.” Laws

were originally instituted, as I have ever understood, for the protection of the weaker members of society against the aggressions of their stronger neighbours—and those chosen to carry the laws into effect, were supposed to be honest upright men—free, to a great extent, from the prejudices of cast and condition—men who could calmly examine the arguments on *both* sides of a question—ever ready to use the power delegated to them for the establishment of order—punishing or restraining offenders, and, at the same time, assisting and protecting the injured and oppressed. This, at the present day, it is well known, is the ostensible object of our law-makers, in framing the multitudinous laws by which we are governed. What a monstrous perversion, then, of justice, is the conduct of the Bow-street magistrate in the above case! What a shameless and scandalously indecent outrage did this precious “*justice*” commit upon the decencies of society, by applauding an impudent breaker of the laws, which he, the said justice, had *sworn* to protect. Mr. Jardine said, “he was exceedingly glad” the prisoner had *destroyed* and *stolen* the property of those with whom he differed in opinion—and, moreover, that it was a laudable spirit which influenced the wish of the prisoner to bruise the flesh and break the bones of the same individuals—because, forsooth, they did not think as the prisoner did! The church and the state may well tremble, when its servants openly avow themselves as blasphemers and traitors! Mr. Jardine was *sworn* to justly administer the laws—but we have seen him *injure* and *insult* his god, in totally disregarding the solemn obligation he had called him to witness he would perform—at the same time setting aside the laws of his queen, and substituting his own billious prejudices for wealth and power in their stead.

Precedent is of high value in law matters, and we have it now established upon the authority of a Bow-street magistrate, that it is very praiseworthy for sprigs of the aristocracy to *destroy* and *steal* the property of Infidels, or of those with whom they might differ in opinion, and we may shortly expect to be overrun by lordly housebreakers and gentlemanly bandits. The precedent being established, which legalises the breaking of windows, stealing of placards, and thrashing of individuals—upon the plea of difference of opinion—it will be but a step further, for rich villains to strip the houses of those with whom they are at issue, and murder the inmates.

With a thick-headed, hot-blooded booby, like this Bruce, a knock-down blow would have far more weight than a knock-down argument. If encouragement be given, by the magistrates, to the Waterfords, Walde-

graves, Duffs, Bruces, and such like aristocratic prigs, to commit whatever outrages their fanaticism may suggest, it will be advisable for all dissenters from the dogmas of the "Babylonish whore" to carry "life-preservers"—and use them too. For my own part, I have no notion of quietly submitting to be robbed and murdered by any christian blackguard I may meet, or by any god-believer who may imagine that my opinions of supernaturalism are an insult to heaven. If we are not only to be deprived of the protection of the law, but that the law-officers are to incite men to damage our property and illuse our persons—it is high time we prepared to defend ourselves by *physical force*, seeing that moral argument and persuasion is of no avail. W.C.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

Upon the foregoing case.

The law, surely, is operative in cases where the decencies of society are outraged. If it be not, the disgrace lies with the authorities. Sir James Graham has been, over and over again, through the medium of the *Times*, warned of the existence of this shop (8, Holywell-street), and if the right hon. baronet has not thought, and does not think proper to direct proceedings to be taken against it, is every ninny who may feel his conscience offended, to be allowed to direct his vengeance against the owner with impunity? Mr. Jardine's advice was positively an encouragement to Bruce to break the law, instead of telling him that he had seriously offended it. What must our continental neighbours think, when they are told that in England one man may bludgeon another, and dash in his windows, if he happen to differ on points of religion with him! We have by the connivance of Mr. Jardine, Lynch law brought home to our own doors. Let us put the case in another shape. The *Globe* has taken up the case in a short leading article; and exults in the fact that the "gentleman escaped so well," but complains that the "nuisance should have been left unpunished until a private individual proceeds to a lawless act." Now, the *Globe* is in the daily habit of inserting advertisements in its columns of a nature calculated to bring forth a blush on the cheek of modesty, and to pollute the minds of youth who before had been free from vice—we allude to those beastly notices announcing the publication of books under the alluring but seducing title of "Silent Friend," "Manly Vigour," "Manhood," and which belong to men who impudently call themselves "consulting surgeons." Suppose some few persons were to give way to a "natural impulse"—as breaking windows is called by the *Globe*—and

were to visit all the coffee-houses where the *Globe* is exposed, and were to break the windows of those houses, what would the *Globe* think of such an "impulse?" Why, that the fellows guilty of the outrage ought to be severely punished. Those who throw stones must not live in houses of glass. Attacks upon the bible are called blasphemy; but an outrage upon decency, in the shape of an advertisement, is suffered to pass over; the men that cry out for upholding religion in all its *purity*, are silent when their own exchequer is concerned. The *Morning Chronicle* is another journal whose pages are polluted with these diabolical advertisements; the *Standard* is a third. The latter affects great zeal for religion, while it tolerates a nuisance that must be deprecated by every good man. Mr. Bruce should commence a crusade against the journals, and he would soon find himself set down as a fool, instead of a man acting upon a "natural impulse;" or if he has a desire to promote morals, let him direct his attention to a hundred disgusting publications and prints exposed in other shops in Holywell-street.—*Dispatch*.

A person puts up in his window certain "blasphemous" placards; documents which do not simply assert that he, perhaps, thinks sound, but convey horror to the minds of many, from their outraging the most sacred feelings, and disgust even to those who do not hold things exalted to be at the mercy of things base: it should seem that the law fails at once and directly to abate the nuisance: a young gentleman, the son of a vice-chancellor, goes forth upon a crusade against the blasphemous tract-seller, riotously breaks his window, commits a robbery of his property, by seizing the objectionable paper within his house without warrant: the tradesman claims protection of a magistrate against unauthorised aggression; the magistrate requires the offender to do what he volunteers to do—pay for the broken glass; expressly waives further penalty, and praises the law-breaker as a public benefactor; hinting at a continuance of his rioting as a meritorious enterprise. For anything that appears to the contrary, the young gentleman might, for four shillings a-day, break a pane daily in the bookseller's window, and earn a panegyric from the judgment-seat. The law is defective; the administration of the law is corrupted to that degree that the expounder of the law commends the breach of the law! A vice-chancellor's son, a magistrate, and divers newspaper editors, have conspired to countenance further breaches of the law. True, they say that the motive is creditable; why, if men are to be justified in breaking the law from good motives, the whole social system is dissolved. The theory of society is, that

individual convictions and wills are waived, and that a rule is adopted for the control and safeguard of all. Admit that the sway of individual will may be exerted independently of that settled rule, and you annul the compact. It is such a defiance of the compact which constitutes the offence of which the bookseller is accused. It was a similar motive that actuated those who led mobs to burn Priestley's house at Birmingham, Guy Fawkes to blow up James and his parliament, Charles the Ninth to treat Protestants like partridges. If the law is to be set aside or evaded whenever accused and the judge happen to be of a mind as to its inexpediency, it can no longer give safety.—*Spectator*.

THE BLASPHEMOUS PUBLICATIONS.
—We are happy in being able to state that the government has at length determined

upon taking the necessary steps to put down the nuisance in Holywell-street, which, for some time past, has scandalised every right-minded person passing that thoroughfare, and the continued existence of which was felt to reflect disgrace on the rulers of a christian country. We understand that Mr. Manle, the solicitor of the treasury, has received instructions to proceed against the men Paterson and Ryall, and that the Police are at present engaged in procuring such evidence as shall bring home a case to these offenders against public morals and public decency. Mr. Maule's principal clerk had a long interview with Mr. Hall, the chief magistrate at Bow-street, on Thursday afternoon, upon the same subject; and we hope that the next time we have to notice this matter it will be to inform the public that the abomination has been put down.—*Globe*.

HAMAN AND GRAHAM.

And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king.

Haman said, moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to-morrow am I invited unto her also with the king.

Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.

And Graham told them of the glory of his riches, of the multitude of his constables, and the honours wherein the queen had promoted him, and how she had advanced him among the ministers and servants of the queen.

Graham said, moreover, Yea, Victoria the queen, did let no waiting-woman, or woman of the bed-chamber, come into the presence of the queen without my counsel and the counsel of my wise men; and in a short time I will be invited to meet the queen along with the princes and nobles and great men.

Graham said, moreover, I have ground the faces of the poor; I have turned a deaf ear to the people's wailings; I have disregarded their petitions, and have hindered the people from meeting to discuss their grievances; yet all this availeth nothing so long as I see Paterson the Atheist giving out the *Oracle of Reason* to the people in the queen's highway.

SUBSCRIPTIONS, For the Anti-Persecution Union.

Mr. Bragg, collector 78	..	..	..	..	£0	8	0
Mr. Cotton	..	..	..	..	0	1	6
Mr. Thomas, collector 15	..	..	..	..	0	6	2
Antichrist	..	..	..	..	0	0	6
R. L. U. and A. C.	..	..	..	..	0	7	0
Collector 127	..	..	..	..	0	6	6
Few liberal friends in Greenock, per John Macallister							
Leicester	..	..	..	..	0	10	6
Worcester	..	..	..	..	0	4	0
Mr. Mansfield	..	..	..	..	0	3	0
London.	..	..	..	..	0	5	0


M. RYALL, Sec.

Received by Mr. Holyoake for Mrs. H., per I. Ironside, Esq., Sheffield... .. £0 14 9

already been sold off), we intend to re-print that celebrated number first. No. 1 will be brought out immediately afterwards, and all the others in succession. The fiat of No. 4 has gone forth; it cannot be destroyed! Not all the governments, or bishops, or plundering priests in the world can even tarnish its fame—much less annihilate it. It is rooted in the soil of the universe and will last while matter exists. The priests may curse their stars and the bitter day they intermeddled with its publication. Charles Southwell's terrible denunciation of the Jew-book will be read when that vile imposition has been cast away by the last remnant of putrid fanaticism.

Printed and Published by THOMAS PATERSON, No. 8, Holywell-street, Strand, London, to whom all Communications should be addressed.

Saturday, December 24, 1842.

 A re-issue of the early numbers of the *Oracle* will shortly be commenced. But in consequence of the extraordinary demand for No. 4 (three large editions of which have

THE
ORACLE OF REASON:
Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE"

EDITED BY THOMAS PATERSON.

No. 54.] Originally Edited by CHARLES SOUTHWELL, sentenced, on January 15, 1842, to Twelve Months' Imprisonment in Bristol Gaol, and to pay a fine of £100, [PRICE 1D.
for Blasphemy, contained in No. 4.
Second Editor, G. J. HOLYOAKE, sentenced, on August 15, 1842, to Six Months' Imprisonment in Gloucester Gaol, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.

**THE EARLY CHRISTIANS AND
THEIR OPPONENTS.**

"AFTER all (I quote from Lardner)* we have seen a goodly catalogue of heathen writers, in the first and second century, men of great eminence for their wit and learning, their high stations, and their credit in the world, who have, in their way, borne testimony to Jesus Christ and the things concerning him." This is true, and christians have good reason to exclaim—"pity 'tis, 'tis true." Some considerable writers and no mean philosophers, as Celsus, Porphyry, Hierocles, and Julian, did most undoubtedly bear testimony, in *their way*, to Jesus Christ and the things concerning him; but what manner of way that was, we shall presently explain. That the early christians would rather have been *without* than *with* their testimony, is proved by the great pains taken by the first christian emperors to destroy every vestige of such *admirable* testimony. If the reader can turn to certain decrees of the christian emperors, Constantine and Theodosius, quoted in Taylor's "Syntagma," p. 35, he will find that all writings adverse to the claims of the christian religion, were marked out for destruction. Those pious defenders of the faith, had a notion that the readiest and least troublesome way of meeting anti-christian arguments, was to burn the books which contained them. The decree issued by Theodosius, in the latter part of the fourth century, was as follows:

"The decree, that all writings whatever, which Porphyry or any one else hath written against the christian religion, in the possession of whomsoever they may be found, should be committed to the fire; for we should not suffer any of those things so much as to come to men's ears, which tend to provoke god to wrath, and to offend the minds of the pious."

With this evidence of christian care, that what their opponents wrote should not be read, our surprise must cease that so little can be adduced from Pagan authors

against the christian scheme. All that favoured their own views, christians have religiously preserved, the rest could not resist the *fiery* ordeal through which they were doomed to pass. Fire is no respecter of persons, books, or arguments, and christians have found it an admirable auxiliary in the great and glorious work of convincing the nations. All is good, if done for the honour of god and the welfare of his church; at least, such has been the practical doctrine of the crowd of christians. They burnt their enemies books, and, when possible, their bodies also. When neither Pagan books nor Pagan bodies could be found for fuel, they then, in honour of god, did the like by their fellows, in a sincere, charitable, and holy spirit, for who can doubt that "christians have burnt each other, quite persuaded all the apostles would have done as they did?"

It must, however, be confessed rather too bad, for christians to taunt us modern Infidels with the fact, that the proofs and arguments urged in refutation of christianity, by Julian and others, are remarkably scanty; it is, I say, rather too bad for christians to taunt us with the lack of argument and evidence which their christian ancestors took so much pains to destroy. That all the early opponents of their religious schemes were men of talent, learning, and virtue, is allowed on all hands. "Porphyry (says Lardner, in the work before quoted) was a man of great abilities. His objections against christianity were in esteem with gentile people for a long while. His enmity to the christians and their principles was very great. Nevertheless, from the remaining fragments of his work against the christians, and from his other writings, we may reap no small benefit." Now, if christians have cause to be so well satisfied with the fragments of Porphyry's work, written against them, it is much to be regretted that they did not preserve it entire. By quoting one of the "fragments" from the immense wreck of his works, I am of opinion that the average of readers will conclude that the "no small benefit" reaped by christians or christianity therefrom, is, in vulgar parlance,

* See Dr. Lardner's "Credibility," vol. vii. p. 307.
9—VOL. II.

over the left.* “If Christ (says Porphyry) (as he pretended) be the way of salvation, the truth and the life (John xiv. 6), and they only who believe in him can be saved, what became of the men which lived before his coming? How came it to pass that the gracious and merciful god should suffer all nations, from Adam to Moses, and from Moses to the coming of Christ, to perish through ignorance of his law and command? Forasmuch as neither Britain, fruitful of tyrants, nor the Scottish nation, nor the barbarous people all around, were acquainted with Moses and the prophets, what necessity, therefore, was there that he should come at the end of the world, and not till after an innumerable multitude of men had perished?” How christians are to lay up “no small benefit” from such “fragments” puzzles me to understand. According to Lardner, we are bound to conclude that this was Porphyry’s way of bearing testimony to Jesus Christ, and the things concerning him. Still it must, I fancy, be acknowledged, that if such testimony be really favourable to Christ, and the things concerning him, ’twould be difficult for the most clever and furious opponent to bear testimony against it. Keith, in his “Demonstration of the Truth of the Christian Religion,” tells us that “they (Porphyry, Celsus, Hierocles, and Julian) who have vented their malice against the gospel by their writings, as others did by actions, are now, in their proper order, our witnesses, and lead us on to the direct demonstration that the gospel is alike authentic and divine.” This much puffed, and very silly, Keith, draws the above comfortable conclusion, from the “fragment” of Porphyry just commented upon, and some other “fragments” from Celsus, Hierocles, and Julian, of a *similar character*. It was a distinguishing and happy characteristic of the immortal Don Quixote, that he often mistook defeats for victories, and by an unaccountable perversity of intellect was seldom more happy than when the cudgel of some base-born clown, whom he supposed either a magician or a windmill, had well nigh beaten him to a mummy. Poor Keith is quite a Quixotic christian, and has so bewildered his brains with what he calls *prophecy*, that with him nothing is but what is not, and nothing more favourable to christianity, nothing so demonstrative of its untold and untellable excellence, than those very writings which, as it were, plucked it up by the roots. I must, however, in justice, remark, that Keith candidly admits, the wisdom of men has nothing whatever to do with the faith of christians. His words are† “The faith of christians stands not in

the wisdom of man, but in the power of god.” Of course, such a writer may play the fool consistently, for the faith which stands not in the *wisdom* of man, must, I conceive, have no other than a *foolish* soil to stand in. But to proceed with the other learned heathen writers, who, in *their way*, have borne testimony to Christ and the things concerning him. I must confine myself to one fragment from each of the said learned heathens, though several have, in spite of christian care, floated down to us, and all I have met with tell equally in favour of christians and their blessed scheme.

(To be continued.)

FRUITS OF THE GOD-IDEA.

THE most extravagant speculation, the most senseless cheat, the most visionary fraud, the most ignorant chimera ever foisted on an undiscerning and credulous world—has been the god-idea. It has, by its frightful phantoms, forced the mind to vegetate in primitive stupidity, entangled man’s reason in a labyrinth, from which he cannot extricate himself, it has subjugated the many for the benefit of the few, it has manacled the limbs and torporised the mind—the invention of the god-idea has robbed man of every noble thought, feeling, impulse, and made him the prey of the most savage passions—while the supposed deity is described as exulting, with fiendish delight, over the horrid desolation.

Do christians want proofs? Let them turn to the bible, its pages will furnish, to reflective minds, an ample illustration of the fruits of god worship. There will they find recorded the bloody rites, incestial orgies, sensual ceremonies, obscene representations, scandalous prostitutions, gorging feasts, vindictive murders, heartrending immolations, and every curse and crime in the calendar of human depravity—as the actions of the peculiar favourites of a god—and that god is *the god of the christians*.

All tyrannies are based upon the god-idea. Nothing but the fear of an infinitely powerful and vindictive being, would induce men to submit to the countless villanies practised upon them by their fellow-mortals, who have treacherously infused the idea that they are of a superior order, born to power and wealth. Man has become a mere machine in the hands of political and theological tyrants, who treating him as a slave, he has contracted the vices of one. The god-idea ever was and ever will be, the true cause of man’s depravity, of his social and political inequality—teaching and instilling into him forbearance under the most atrocious oppressions—from the expectation of being rewarded hereafter.

The god-idea, wherever existing, has pro-

* See Lardner, vol. vii., pp. 4, 38, 439.

† See “Demonstration,” p. 294.

duced similar effects. The Jupiter and Neptune of the Greeks, the Brahma and Vishnu of the Hindoos, the Osiris and Typhon of the Egyptians, the Mythras and Ormuzd of the Persians, or the Jehovah and Satan of the Jews and christians—have alike crushed man's intellect, warped his judgment, and made the earth a hell!

Men of England! how much longer will you suffer such contemptible mummery to enslave you? Mankind are, indeed, a long enduring race, or the bats and owls, congregated and fattened in the wigwams and prairies of the Jew-god and his heavenly host, would, long ere this, have been swept from the earth by the fury and scorn of an oppressed people! But it is not too late. Let them inquire into everything, diffuse what is true, overthrow what is false. It is high time men thought for themselves, they have been duped and plundered long enough by priestly, legal, titled, and moneyed rulers, who, by the staff, the bible, and the bayonet, manage to get them down, and when they are down to keep them down. Let the religious, political, and social swindles be once exposed, and honest producers will get their own. Destroy the god incubus, and there will be no occasion for men to rail at churches or bishops—themselves are the fools, who invite the knaves to blindfold them, while they have their pockets picked. Destroy the cause and the effect will cease. T.P.

THIEVES! CHRISTIAN THIEVES!

MORE ROBBERS OF "OUR SHOP," AND MORE CHRISTIAN JUSTICE.

WHAT an easy thing it is for a man to prophecy. A little reason and common-sense, a slight capacity for tracing effect to cause backward, and cause to effect forward, and one might set up shop, now a days, with certain prospect of success. It needeth not now, as formerly, that we be drunk with the holy-ghost, stripped of our unmentionables, and wearing a beard like a goat—before we are qualified to look into futurity. Oh, no! Experience has accumulated, and the physical and mental worlds are now so well understood, that a man may behave himself like unto all other men, and yet be able to divine future events. The gods do not now tell their intentions to fools or madmen exclusively, but entrust their decrees to common-place individuals, and even, occasionally, to their direst foes—those who deride their power, and spit upon their name. A remarkable instance of the latter fact may be found in the previous number of this work, wherein it was confidently predicted by the writer, that the recent decision of Judge Jefferies, otherwise Magistrate Jardine, in the case of *Paterson v. Bruce*, would induce

other christian ruffians to try their hands at petty larceny upon the property of Atheists, as a preparatory step to the bolder and blacker crimes of murder and arson. And so it hap'd. For on the very day that the said number went to press, another Bruce, green as his name, passing to his place of business in the city, saw in the window of "our shop" a placard, like unto that which had been so recently hewn into pieces by the impassioned, pious, and virtuous Vice, jun. So like was it unto the former, that "nothing but itself could be its parallel." But though the papers were alike, the effects upon the organisations of the two beholders were not, probably from a difference in the weight of their purses. In the case of the junior vice-chancellor, the placard strongly excited combativeness, whereas with Mister Green we find cautiousness on the alert. These differences are, however, easy of solution—the former was an aristocrat or idle plunderer, and, as the proverb says, "light come light go"—whereas the latter was a cunning christian Jew, or merchant.

The aristocrat, acting upon the principles of feudality, considering all plebeians as his serfs, *commands* the removal of the offensive paper, and obedience not following, breaks the windows, steals and destroys the property, and threatens the owner with death. On the other hand, the man of traffic and fraud, goes to his den, takes counsel with his cub—a whelp after his own heart, and whom he is evidently bringing up in the way he should go—sneaks back, when there are no men present, jumps upon the counter, and, like his prototype, steals a placard, which he hands, in the language of the Old Bailey, to his "juvenile associate." Had a similar robbery been committed upon a christian, by a fellow-christian, the penny-a-liner reporting it would have commenced, with "HOARY VILLANY AND YOUTHFUL DEPRAVITY," but

When an Atheist's in the case,
All villany, of course, gives place,

and it will be found recorded in the journals of the lord, as "praiseworthy zeal," and "pious enthusiasm."

As the circumstances of the case are given below in the proceedings at the police-office, I shall only make a few remarks upon the conduct of the Bow-street Midas, before whom the case was heard. The christian merchant was handed over to a policeman, and the stolen property was found upon him, yet the christian just-ass declared "that it was quite evident that Mister Green had no intention whatever to commit a robbery!"

O upright judge! . . . O learned judge!
Is that the law?
Yes—of Bow-street!

It was "quite evident Mister Green had no intention whatever to commit a robbery"—having already committed it.

"If (continued just-ass Jardine) the prosecutor had anything to complain of, or if he felt himself injured by the proceeding, he had his remedy, by bringing an action against Mr. Green for trespass." In other words, if the plundered Atheist have gold sufficient, he can *purchase* justice—but he cannot have it without. Yes, and if he have, he can purchase it both for Mister Green and Mister Jardine. Upon Paterson, the person who had been robbed, asking "whether the protection of the police was to be withdrawn from him," Jefferies replied, that "No one knew better than he (Paterson) did that he was just as much entitled to the protection of the police as any other person." Having previously declared that the bare-faced christian thief, Green, "ought never to have been taken into custody." Here is protection for us! A magistrate inciting men to commit robberies, and reprimanding thieftakers for arresting thieves!

The catalogue of christian enormities is not yet full—

A *third* is like the former

Another christian merchant, apeing his betters, and encouraged by the decisions of the Bow-street Solons, enters "our shop" the day following Mr. Green's depredation, and steals *several* placards—is brought before a different just-ass of the same court—and, as a matter of course, discharged—the oath-juggle being made an excuse for not taking the evidence against the culprit.

What peddling, petty knaves are the christians of *our* day—why do they not follow the examples set them by the Jews of old? as recorded in that "concentration of abominations called bible." Old Jehovah, on several occasions, directed his pet "tigers," not only to *rob* their enemies and the enemies of their lord, but to *murder* them and *burn* their cities, putting to the sword men, women, and children, sparing none but those maidens who had never known man—the luxury of whose charms rewarded them for their toils. Why are the christians not to the full as

Bloody, bold, and resolute

as the lord's "chosen people?" They have the desire doubtless, and only want for courage. Where are their priests—always foremost in mischief, and where blood is to be spilt?—their chant should be

Up rouse ye, then, my merry, merry men,
For 'tis our opening day,

and forthwith proceed, with their bigotted and brutal hordes to "rifle, rob, and murder" all Infidels, whether Deists or Athe-

ists. What was good in the eyes of a *never changing* god six thousand years since, must be good now. Up then with the Jew-book and the cross, and hurrah for a crusade! On then, ye christian bloodhounds!—rob, burn, and murder, as in the days of yore, for by it ye insure eternal happiness, and everlasting communion with your gory god. With your feet bedabbled in the blood of Infidels—your hair dropping with their gore—whilst in either hand you clutch a heart and tongue, torn from a *reasoning* dog—present yourselves before *your* redeemer, he who died for *you*—the swearing, conjuring, thieving, and seditious knave of Nazareth—he will receive you with open arms, bathe you in tears of joy, and clothe you in purple and fine linen!

W. C.

BOW-STREET POLICE OFFICE.

(From the Times.)

Yesterday (Tuesday) Mr. Philip James Green of No. 4, Dorset-place, Marylebone, a merchant, was brought up in the custody of the police, and placed at the bar before Mr. Jardine, charged with stealing a paper from the shop-window of a person of the name of Paterson, described as a bookseller, No. 8, Holywell-street, Strand.

George Clarke, a youth, stated that he was in the service of the prosecutor as errand-boy. About 2 o'clock that afternoon, whilst standing in his master's shop, the prisoner entered and requested him to remove a placard which was exhibited in the window. Witness told him that he could not think of doing so without the sanction of his master. The prisoner repeated the request two or three times, and upon his (witness) still refusing to comply with it, the prisoner jumped on the counter, drew back the window, and pulled down the placard in question, which he delivered to a young person, whom he has since understood to be his son, who was standing by his side at the time. Witness then called a constable, and gave him into custody for the robbery.

Mr. Jardine inquired what became of the placard? Constable F 27 produced the paper which was given to him by the prisoner. It was a copy of the placard taken from the window a few days since.

The witness Clarke further stated, that many gentlemen had been to the shop to inquire the price of the placard, and that when he informed his master of the circumstance, he desired him to get 5s. for it if he could.

Mr. Green said, that when at the station-house, the witness was asked what he valued the paper at, and his reply was "nothing."

In answer to the charge, Mr. Green said, that as he was passing through Holywell-street that morning, on his way to his office in the city, he saw the witness Clarke taking down the shutters of the shop-window, and he then observed the placard produced as well as others in the window. On arriving at his office he consulted with his son upon the subject, and they came to the determination to go to the shop and pull down the placards unless they were removed upon a request to that effect being made. They accordingly went to the shop, and, as the boy had very correctly stated, tore down the

placard, but not before the boy had refused several times to remove them.

Mr. Jardine inquired of the witness Clarke, who placed the placards in the window?

Witness.—I put them there myself.

Mr. Jardine.—Now I wish to know who ordered you to do so?

Witness.—I shall decline answering that question.

Mr. Twyford, who happened to be present, observed that the witness had already said he could not remove the papers without the sanction of his master.

Mr. Jardine said it might be easily inferred, from that observation, by whose order they were placed in the window.

Mr. Jardine again put the question to the witness, when he replied that his master desired him to put the papers in the window.

Mr. Jardine.—Why did you decline to answer the question when it was first put to you?

Witness (after some hesitation).—My master told me not to answer any such questions.

Mr. Jardine said there could be no difficulty whatever in disposing of the case, because it was quite evident that Mr. Green had no intention whatever to commit a robbery. The object he had in view in taking the paper was perfectly clear. There could be no doubt that it was for the purpose of bringing the question, with respect to the exhibition of such a placard, to an issue. If the prosecutor had anything to complain of, or if he felt himself injured by the proceeding, he had his remedy, by bringing an action against Mr. Green for trespass. He should at once discharge Mr. Green, it being quite evident that he did not intend to commit a theft, he ought never to have been taken into custody on such a charge.

Mr. Green was accordingly discharged.

Paterson then came forward, and said he had to apply for the sum of 8s., the amount of the damage done to his window by Mr. Bruce, and which sum had been detained by the magistrate.

Mr. Jardine said the money should be given to him.

Mr. Burnaby told Paterson that he would get the money, by applying for it, in the clerk's-office, but he must give a receipt for it.

Paterson then said he had another application to make to the court. It was to know whether the accounts concerning him, which had lately appeared in the newspapers, were correct?

Mr. Jardine said that was a subject with which he had nothing whatever to do.

Paterson said he also wished to be distinctly informed whether the protection of the police was to be withdrawn from him?

Mr. Jardine said no one knew better than he (Paterson) did that he was just as much entitled to the protection of the police as any other person.

Paterson.—Well, then, now, I wish to know whether I cannot have a warrant against Mr. Bruce?

Mr. Jardine.—For what?

Paterson.—For robbery.

Mr. Jardine.—What is the nature of the robbery?

Paterson.—Mr. Bruce came to my shop, broke the window, and took from it a paper which he still retains possession of, or else it is in the possession of the police.

Mr. Jardine said he must know a great deal more about the matter before he could assume that Mr. Bruce had committed a robbery.

Paterson.—Then I suppose I am not to be protected. I again wish to ask whether I am not to be allowed the protection of the police?

Mr. Jardine.—It is not my duty to sit here to answer such questions; If you have any specific application to make I am ready to hear it.

Paterson.—Well, then, I apply for a warrant against Mr. Bruce.

Mr. Jardine.—You must state the grounds upon which you make the application.

Paterson.—I wish to have a warrant against him, in order to have him bound over to keep the peace. He has threatened to break every bone in my body, and I have a witness to prove it.

The boy Clarke was again called forward, and in answer to questions put to him by Paterson said, that when Mr. Bruce was at the shop on Tuesday last he declared that he would break every bone in his master's body if he could get hold of him.

Mr. Jardine.—Did he say anything else?

Witness.—Yes, he stole a paper, and broke the windows, for which I gave him into custody.

Mr. Jardine.—Have you seen Mr. Bruce since that time?

Witness.—No, I have not.

Mr. Jardine.—Mr. Bruce's visit related to the paper in question, or a copy of it, did it not?

Witness.—Yes, it did.

Mr. Jardine then said, that he was quite certain there was no danger to be apprehended from Mr. Bruce, therefore he should decline granting a warrant against him.

Paterson.—Then I suppose I am to understand that no redress is to be afforded me?

Mr. Jardine.—Under existing circumstances it is not in my power to afford you any.

Paterson then left the court, expressing his determination to adopt other means of obtaining redress.

Shortly afterwards Mr. Abrahams, Paterson's landlord, who himself resides nearly opposite the house, waited upon Mr. Jardine, and expressed his regret that such a person had got possession of the premises; he (Mr. Abrahams) was a strict Jew, and could never countenance any attempt to ridicule the holy scriptures.

Mr. Jardine did not for a moment consider, that any blame attached to Mr. Abrahams for what took place in the house.

Mr. Abrahams begged to assure the magistrate, that he would with pleasure render every assistance in his power to the authorities, in putting an end to such a nuisance.

As Paterson was leaving the court, Boyd, one of the warrant-officers, served upon him four summonses, which had been granted on Saturday last, upon the application of Mr. Chambers, for exhibiting to public view in his shop windows certain blasphemous publications.

Yesterday, (Wednesday) amongst the night charges, Mr. T. Pearce, corn-merchant, of Lion-wharf, Queenhithe, was placed at the bar before Mr. Twyford, charged with stealing several written placards from the shop of T. Paterson, No. 8, Holywell-street.

When the case was called, Paterson stepped forward, and requested to have the hearing postponed for a short time, as he was not quite prepared to proceed with it.

Mr. Pearce said, he was fully prepared to meet any charge which might be preferred against him; and, therefore, he saw no reason whatever for his being longer detained. It was the prosecutor's duty to be prepared to go on with the case, therefore he must oppose the application; more particularly as any further delay would be attended with very great inconvenience to him, as it was necessary that he should be at the Corn Exchange at an early hour to transact business of importance.

Mr. Twyford said, it was customary to proceed with the night charges in their usual order, as sufficient time was given for persons having complaints to make to be prepared with the necessary evidence, and he saw no reason in the present instance to depart from the general rule.

Paterson then called forward his errand-boy, Clarke, in order to support the charge. On getting into the witness-box.

Mr. Twyford said—Now, my boy, before I allow you to take the holy scriptures in your hand to be sworn, I must ask you a question or two. Do you believe in a future state—I mean by that heaven and the deity?

Clarke.—I can't say anything about that; I think I am not old enough to judge about the matter.

Mr. Twyford.—After such an answer I do not consider myself justified in allowing you to be sworn; consequently, I cannot receive your evidence. (Addressing Paterson)—Have you any other witnesses?

Paterson.—No, I have not.

Mr. Twyford (to the prisoner).—You are discharged, sir.—Mr. Pearce then left the court.

On Saturday, Dec. 24, Mr. Paterson not appearing, when called upon to answer to the four summonses, Mr. Chambers applied for warrants, which were granted.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

Were Mr. Paterson a person of John Bull feelings, we might expect that the next person who paid him a visit, with his demand and his seizure, would be welcomed with a knock on the head.—*Birmingham Journal*.

THE HOLYWELL STREET CASE. — We live in so very singular a world, that we are seldom surprised at any thing that any body does, or says, in it—especially when the parties concerned are police magistrates, or very young men, whose intellects are evidently governed by different rules from those of the rest of mankind. But we confess, that in spite of our *nil admirari* system, we are astonished at Mr. Jardine's recent decision in the Holywell-street blasphemy case, and above all at the tame acquiescence with which it has been received. In our judgment, few things have ever occurred more indefensible in principle, and more dangerous in practice—and our regret at the tone in which Mr. Knight Bruce's conduct has been commented upon by the *Globe*, is increased by the advantage taken of its admissions by the tory press. We admit the right to deal with a *nuisance* as such, although, if experience prove anything, it shows that this power cannot be exercised too charily where *opinion* is concerned. For the only plea upon which interference can be justified, is the necessity of defending truth against error, by the strong arm of the law. Yet every change for the better, that has taken place during the last thousand years, is a triumph of truth over error—and why are we now to assume that in such a contest truth requires external aid? What is truth? Where is the standard of it? If in the scriptures, where is the key to them? We have no standard of interpretation. If in the opinions of a majority of mankind, what error is there, in which the majority of mankind has not, at some time, believed? The history of the race consists, as far as our knowledge extends, in the casting off, periodically, of some grand mistake, by which its progress has been delayed. Are

we quite sure there are no mistakes now? No! there is no process by which we can arrive at truth, except by permitting all to be said upon every subject, that can be said, and by trusting to time, the collision of opinions, and that innate consciousness of right, which we believe to be inherent in the human mind, to bring us safe to our journey's end. Restraints imply a certainty, on the part of those who impose them, that they themselves can determine what is true and what is false. It was the argument of the inquisition. Is it to be ours? Or are we rather to say with Mr. Bailey, in his admirable essay upon the publication of opinions, "It is a work of difficulty to overturn even established *error*, because the interests, passions, and prejudices, of so many are engaged in its support. Why then need we fear the overthrow of established *truth*, with prescription, interest, prejudice, and passion in its favour, aided by the powerful alliance of reason itself?" We regard, therefore, Mr. Jardine's late decision as "an important step"—the wrong way. However much inclined to sympathise with Mr. Knight Bruce's feelings, he ought to have checked them with a fine, instead of leaving a great principle in doubt. For it is a great principle to assert, at all times, the supremacy of the law, instead of encouraging individuals to expound, and apply it, themselves. Let the *Standard* act upon its own principles, and we shall see its respectable proprietor, or editor, taking a shot at Publicola, as the easiest mode of putting down a nuisance *par voie de fait*; and Crockford's Club establishing a character for morality, upon easy terms, by a crusade against Holywell-street. This is the legitimate consequence of Mr. Jardine's magisterial lesson, as applied by our tory contemporary; and, as we see no limits to the mischief that may arise from it, it is high time that the matter should be set right.—*Weekly Chronicle*.

Yesterday the abomination (in Holywell-street) was attacked *in the right way*—attacked *par voie de fait*. Mr. Lewis Knight Bruce, son of the vice-chancellor (and the father of such a son is to be envied), passing through Holywell-street, was shocked by the display of several atrocious insults to the majesty of heaven, in the window of the den of blasphemy to which we have referred. He instantly *commanded* the shopkeeper in attendance to remove the abominable papers. That person refused, and upon the refusal Mr. Bruce broke two panes of the shop-window, and succeeded in carrying-off one paper. In the attempt to secure a second he failed. He then surrendered to a policeman, and was by him, at the instance of the vendor of blasphemy, brought before Mr. Jardine, the magistrate at the time presiding at

Bow-street. Mr. Jardine heard the case, and examined the paper seized by Mr. Bruce, most *justly complimented that gentleman upon his conduct, declined to impose any fine upon him*, and impounded the money which he was obliged to exact for the broken glass, with a significant hint, that if the proprietor of the blasphemy-shop should come to demand it, he would be prosecuted for the offence of which he would thus furnish evidence against himself. Thus, a mode is pointed out by which the detestable trade of these corrupters of the minds of the young and ignorant may be promptly suppressed, at a trifling cost.—*Standard*.

FREAKS OF "JUSTICES."—We have often thought that it would be a rich treat of fun annually to compile and publish in a volume the decisions of the worshipful justices of this metropolis; they would make a comic annual, far exceeding, in one respect, the humorous productions of Hood or Hook. They might not have—they would not have—the wit of those productions, but would wondrously surpass them in ridiculousness. A man of taste would prefer Hood or Hook: but what do the justices care for men of taste, or what have men of taste to do with justices? The ears of Midas seem the proper heir-looms of the justice office. Each individual, as soon as possible after his appointment, asserts his title of admission to the brotherhood of folly, by some act of undoubted absurdity; he proves that he too practically understands what is "justices' justice," and gives speedy intimation, that whatever might, before his appointment, have been his reputation in the world for common sense or fairness, that reputation has either been wholly undeserved, or is an incumbrance on him in the performance of the powers of his new office, and is therefore a thing to be got rid of at once. The process is quickly performed; and the justices readily acknowledge that their new brother is fit to hear them company. The past week has furnished us with two special instances of "justices' justice." The first is at once the most deplorable specimen of moral weakness and of bad law, that we have seen for some time. A young gentleman, with much more money than wit, and much less prudence than impetuosity, sees a placard in a shop window, and forthwith goes in to demand that the placard may be removed. The shop-boy says that he must not remove it without his master's permission, and that his master is not then at home. The young gentlemen cannot bear any delay in the execution of his will, and therefore thrusts his stick through the window, and removes the bill, which he tears in two, and then gives it to a bystander. The young gentleman is taken before a

justice of the peace—one of the men bound by his situation and office to administer the law—and this worthy follower of Midas at once decides that the young gentleman did quite rightly in breaking the window, and removing the placard. How happily Mr. Jardine slurs over his own duty as a magistrate, while he violates the law in the order he makes on the defendant. Mr. Bruce (alas that it should have to be written that one so rash and hasty, as the defendant, is the son of one of the vice chancellors) had clearly committed a breach of the peace; it was the duty of the magistrate to have reprov'd him for doing so, not to have praised his conduct and impliedly to recommend it to imitation. If the bookseller had been guilty of any offence, on which question we say nothing in his favour, it was the duty of the magistrate, on having the case brought before him, to institute proceedings against the offender. But he was equally bound to punish, as the law required, that other offender who had brought the bookseller's offence under his notice. Mr. Jardine did, in both respects, exactly the reverse of what he ought. He ought to have fined Mr. Bruce (the payment for the broken windows was not a fine), and he ought to have issued his warrant against the bookseller. Instead of that he praised Mr. Bruce for one violation of the law, and then left unnoticed what he himself announced from the bench to be another violation of the law. Mr. Jardine preferred to have the law administered by volunteers, like Mr. Bruce, after a fashion of their own, instead of being willing to incur the trouble of causing it to be administered by the legal authorities of the country. Mr. Jardine thought the bill a bad one, an offence against law, and therefore would have it put it down by the commission of another offence against law. If he is prepared always to act on this principle he will have to explain it thoroughly, and then he may retire from the bench at once, for the necessity for his duties will have ceased when his recommendations have had time to be carried into effect. If every man is to take the law into his own hands, and he praised by a magistrate for so doing, we shall shortly need no magistrates. The Lynch Law may thus be established by authority, but its very establishment will be accompanied with the abdication of the magisterial law. No doubt the former will be more acceptable than the latter to men of hasty tempers and warm feelings, but it may be reasonably doubted whether it will be equally beneficial to the public. If we are to have it, at least let us have some compensation for its introduction, and if the magistrates thus relieve themselves from the performance of their official functions they should be relieved by the public from the burdensome appearance of holding office.—*Bell's Life in London*.

CORRESPONDENCE.

AN EDUCATIONAL HINT TO THE INFIDELS.

To the notice of those Infidels who are desirous that their children should hold notions upon religion similar to their own, and who think they cannot too early attempt to convince them of the erroneousness of the religious folks' opinions, I beg to submit an extract from the "Progressive Education" of Madame Necker de Saussure; which, with the slight alterations I have made in it, may be as useful to Infidels as to the class for whom it was intended.

"A proof necessarily implies a doubt; and has often the power of raising one, without being able to dispel it. Were the truth we seek to establish self-evident, we should not take the trouble to prove it: in order, therefore, to show the necessity of the proof, the opposite opinion must be placed in a strong light. Hence arises a double task. We must state the error in order to refute it; and we must explain the truth in order to impress it on the mind. But the former is, to say the least, a useless task, and often leaves behind but too strong an impression. For example, if we wish to disprove the existence of god, we are obliged to make it something; but the imagination of children is of such a nature, that it is much easier to raise a phantom in their minds than to lay it again." To the half-formed minds of children the phantoms of religion are as attractive, as to the minds of the savages who originated them.

To the Atheist, whose belief is a negation, I should say, keep the mind of your child, as regards religion, a perfect blank; to the Infidel who more or less affects the *positive*, let him to that extent, as early as he pleases, *affirmatively* teach his child; but let him not attempt to negative the opposite opinion: as the old saying has it, "if we touch pitch it will stick to our fingers." I will conclude with another extract from Madam Saussure.

"When we wish to communicate knowledge of other kinds to children, how do we begin? We do not wait for them to understand the demonstration of the proposition, before we tell them that the earth is round; nor do we enter into any discussion as to the validity of historical testimony, before we place in their hands, as a true narrative, the history of past ages; we simply declare facts as such: any inquiry into their accuracy is deferred to a later period. Why should we pursue a different plan with respect to religion? In appearing to submit to the examination of children questions above their comprehension, we deceive them as to the

extent of their faculties; and by leading them to decide without sufficient knowledge, we mislead their judgment much more than by merely declaring to them our own conviction of the fact. After all we can say or do, they will still only believe because we do. However we may pretend to enlighten their faith, it will remain the same—nothing but an implicit reliance on us, and on our opinions."

OMNIPAX.

[Excellent remarks, and valuable as hints and food for reflection. It must be remembered, however, that Infidels, as well as other folks, have to mix in the world; their children cannot be prevented from hearing of gods, god-notions, and similar pernicious stuff—therefore the necessity of noticing such current opinions is forced on the parents. It only then becomes a question, whether the infantile mind shall receive the poison alone, or the poison with the antidote. Should be glad to hear again from "Omni-pax."—ED. O. R.]

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For the Anti-Persecution Union.

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Saturday, December 31, 1842.

THE ORACLE OF REASON:

Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE"

EDITED BY THOMAS PATERSON.

No. 55.] *Originally Edited by CHARLES SOUTHWELL, sentenced, on January 15, 1842, to Twelve Months' Imprisonment in Bristol Gaol, and to pay a fine of £100, for Blasphemy, contained in No. 4. [PRICE 1D.*
Second Editor, G. J. HOLYOAKE, sentenced, on August 15, 1842, to Six Months' Imprisonment in Gloucester Gaol, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.

GOD-ALMIGHTY AND THE BLASPHEMY-MAN.

FLABBERGASTED, by god! By god, did you say?—yes, by god. And by god the father, god the son, and god the holy-ghost. "Paterson! Paterson! Paterson!" was cried inside the court. "Paterson! Paterson! Paterson!" was echoed outside the court. No Paterson forthcoming. Paterson gone, by god! God the father sat on a cloud, and gave his orders—god the son shouldered his crucifix, like a sentinel on duty—and god the holy-ghost flapped his wings over the Infidel Paterson. "God willing," Christ's birth-day pudding, with cheerful friends and stout hearts, instead of three ha'p'orth of cannon-ball cheese, or belly-pinching gruel, within one of the queen's lodgings for refractories. God-almighty, though, does not appear to take the profanity so much to heart as god-almighty defenders—for as nothing can be done, and nobody can do a hand's turn, or so much as take a 'bus without his permission, it follows that the three-headed gentleman politely showed Paterson the way—out of town. "God be praised!" as the praise-god-bare-bones of this canting generation ejaculate—"god be praised" for keeping Paterson out of court on Saturday, while the law harpies and the gospel harpies were gloating in anticipation over his dungeoning, per the order of the Bow-street functionary. "You'll grin at the wrong side of your mouth," said a fanatical spooney to Paterson, at the shop, as he saw him laughing, the day before he was expected for a show. "You'll grin in a stone cell," thought the bigots, who waited in court to see the performance.

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Oh, you'd never have forgotten the sensation in court, when "hear, hear" was shouted at the end of the room—then the order to take the fellow into custody—then the hyena-like pounce with which one of the god-protecting blue devils proceeded to execute the mandate, on a gentleman in the corner, who was pointed out as the delinquent—then the alacrity with which two of the godlies present proceeded to swear that a man, whose face they could not see, was the identical person from whom the "hear, hear" proceeded—then the placing of the supposed criminal in the view of court, his cross-questioning and bothering of the ready swearers—then the exulting manner in which the supposed interrupter was ejected from court—all would have been a scene worth your enjoying—the dramatic effect was rich beyond description, nor was the solemn silence of the audience, Infidel and christian, less edifying, during the reading of the profanity. Well, you'll see the end of it in the papers, and how the four "summonses" became waste paper, and four "warrants" were forthwith issued to bring "Mordecai" to the judgment-seat.

"There is a probability of a suppression of the nuisance," quoth Mr. Chambers. Oh, what a mighty deal you know about the matter, or the men you've got to deal with. Government suppress it! Government has force and cunning, can buy talent, and frighten the weak or the wrong doer—but it is out of the power of the strongest executive of the United Kingdom, whether whig or tory, to put down honest, bold men, determined to carry out principle, and who will neither be bullied down, bribed down, cheated down—no, nor ever out-generated.

M.Q.R.

CHRISTMAS PIECES.

POLICE-COURT, BOW-STREET.

[*Metropolitan Police District, to wit.*]

TO THOMAS PATERSON, of No. 8, Holywell-street, in the parish of Saint Clement Danes, within the Metropolitan Police District.

WHEREAS, complaint hath been this day made before me, Thomas James Hall, Esq., one of the police magistrates of the metropolis, sitting at the police-court in Bow-street, within the metropolitan police district, by William Wellesley Medlicott, inspector of police, for that you, on the seventh day of December instant, in a certain thoroughfare, and public place, to wit, Holywell-street, in the parish of Saint Clement Danes, in the liberty of Westminster, and within the limits of the said metropolitan police district, did wilfully and unlawfully exhibit to public view a certain profane paper, according to the tenor and effect following, that is to say :

“MARY’S COMFORTER.

“A holy-ghost in the form of a pigeon, impregnating a human virgin, producing a man-god, or a god-man by the intercourse—co-eternal with himself—the same as himself—sitting at his own right-hand—co-equal with himself and the pigeon. Yet not one god and one pigeon, nor three gods, nor three men, nor three pigeons, but one god, inseparable, yet separated, indivisible, yet divided—infinite, yet sitting on a cloud—eternal, yet begotten, suckled, and crucified—spiritual, yet sweating blood—incomprehensible, yet expounded every seventh day by myriads of black coated, red coated, blue coated, petticoated, surpliced, breeched, and turbaned, plundering, hypocritical, blood sucking, godly impostors.—See *Oracle of Reason*, No. 42.”

To the annoyance of the inhabitants and passengers in the said thoroughfare, contrary to the statute, &c. These are, therefore, in her majesty’s name, to will and require you personally to be and appear before me, or such other police magistrates as shall be then and there sitting, at the police-court aforesaid, on Saturday next, at two o’clock in the afternoon, then and there to answer the premises as the law directs.

And hereof fail not, as you will answer the contempt.

Given under my hand and seal, this nineteenth day of December, in the year of our lord one thousand eight hundred and forty-two.

T. J. HALL, L.S.

I HEREBY give you notice, on the hearing of a certain complaint made before Thomas James Hall, Esq., one of the police magistrates of the metropolis, sitting at the police-

court, in Bow-street, within the metropolitan police district, by me William Wellesley Medlicott, one of the inspectors of the F division of the metropolitan police force, for that you on the seventh day of December instant, in a certain thoroughfare and public place, to wit, in Holywell-street, in the parish of Saint Clement Danes, in the liberty of Westminster, and within the limits of the said metropolitan police district, did wilfully and unlawfully exhibit to public view a certain profane paper, according to the tenor and effect following, that is to say “Mary’s Comforter,” &c., contrary to the statute, &c. And upon which said complaint, you are summoned personally to be and appear at the police-court, Bow-street, aforesaid, on the twenty-fourth day of December instant, to produce the said paper writing in the said summons mentioned and set forth. And I further give you notice to produce, at the same time and place to the said magistrate or magistrates, hearing the said complaint, a certain other paper writing, which, on or about the thirteenth day of November last, was exhibited in the window of the said shop, number 8, Holywell-street aforesaid, and which was to the tenor and effect following, that is to say,

“AT HOME.

“Thomas Paterson, of the blasphemy den, 8, Holywell-street, Strand, desires to acquaint his friends of the *Times*, *Herald*, and *Post*, that he has returned from Brighton, and is at home from ten till four. He thanks them for having come forward in so handsome a manner with the use of their columns, and he will be happy to meet his distinguished allies any evening during the week, to discuss the affairs of *hell* over a dish of tea.—N.B. For the old lady of the *Herald*, he will insinuate a sly drop of the true cognac.”

Dated this nineteenth day of December, one thousand eight hundred and forty-two.

Your obedient servant,

W. W. MEDLICOTT.

To Thomas Paterson.

MR. THOMAS PATERSON TO
MAGISTRATE HALL.

MR. PATERSON presents his compliments to Mr. Hall, and begs to express his regret, if, in declining the honour of Mr. Hall’s invitation, he should in the slightest degree disarrange the routine of his establishment. It is from a feeling of self-respect alone that Mr. Paterson feels it incumbent on him to refrain from sanctioning by his presence the conduct of Mr. Hall’s colleagues, who converted the tribunal of justice into a receptacle for stolen goods, and who have bestowed the sanction of their approval on every unfledged booby, or full grown lunatic,

who may hunt after a cheap and novel notoriety, by an authorised impunity, in the committal of petty larceny, wilful damage, or other outrage against social security. "Show me your company and I will tell you what you are," says the proverb. Mr. Paterson begs to add, that he does not question for a moment the great care and attention which would be bestowed on his comfort and *security*, but would prefer—if a more pressing and irresistible invitation does not reach him—joining in the approaching festivities of the season, with his friends in the country.

TRACTS FOR THE *TIMES*.

Published by the "Society for the Promotion of Atheistical Knowledge," 8, Holywell-street, Strand.

EMPLOYMENT!—REWARD!

The idiot spies you see prowling about, don't earn salt to their porridge; they've been sniffing up *blasphemy*, and poking their noses in every hole and corner, and all the while could'nt make up a bit of *news worth paying for!!! This is to give notice*, that any wide-awake fellow, not troubled with a character, may obtain a situation, by finding out all about the blasphemers, that the "miscreants" may be delivered to the tender mercies of christian courts, christian judges, and christian lawyers. Apply to the Christian Vice Society.

MORE JUSTICES' JUSTICE!

I came not to send peace but a sword. Matt. xii. 34.

Orthodoxy versus Heterodoxy.

A fanatical scamp, half bully, half lunatic, son of one of the members of our plundering aristocracy, breaks two panes of glass—abstracts from the shop window a written paper—rushes into the shop to steal another publication, in which purpose he is defeated by a boy—magnanimously threatens to "lick the proprietor" (*if he were in*), and repeats this threatening language in court. To this series of outrages Mr. In-justice Jardine unctuously remarks, "any well disposed young man would do the same.... was not surprised.... was glad the case was brought before him.... the public ought to be much obliged to Mr. Bruce.... should not fine," &c.

Suppose these rascalities had been committed in an *orthodox* shop and by an *Infidel*!—what think ye, men of London, would not Mr. In-justice Jardine have added, fine, admonition, perhaps imprisonment? Figure to yourselves the face swollen, the eyes distended, the hair "on end," of a modern Bow-street *Midas*, at the enormity of these offences, if committed by an *Infidel*.

God-gulled, tyrant-bestriden, crouching slaves of vampire lords and priests—when will you force justice from your oppressors?—*See Times report of Wednesday, 14th.*

WHAT IS GOD?

The tyrant idea personified.

What is the god-idea promulgated for?

To subjugate the many for the benefit of the few.

How is this contrived?

The god-idea conveys the notion of superior and inferior—produces worship—prostration of intellect and subjugation—all being represented as equal before god, men are humbugged into the belief that they may be unequal among each other.

What further striking results are remarked as emanating from the god-idea?

Forbearance under the most atrocious oppressions, with the expectation of being rewarded hereafter for sufferings here.

How shall we best rid ourselves of the *god-incubus*?

By continually boldly proclaiming in the widest possible spheres, and regardless of cajolment or intimidation, the monstrous delusions of the damnable *god-imposture*.

JUSTICES' JUSTICE AND CHRISTIAN VICE SUPPRESSION ASSOCIATION.

In the Bow-street profane case of Monday last, Mr. Midas Hall decided that a shop was a thoroughfare. Every jolly costermonger, therefore, who may take a fancy to drive his donkey through a china shop, has his authority from Mr. Midas Hall.

Mr. Midas Hall also told the religious and godly vice-mongering association, that he knew all about what's profane, and would let all profane fellows have a taste of the "fine" and the "prison."

Este procul profani!—get out of the way of the Midases, the vice-mongers, and the blue-bottle spies. Oh, profane folks! Show not a profane print. Publish not a profane book. Display not a profane paper.

Now what do you think is "profane?" Any thing that is not sacred or divine?

Is Mister Magistrate Hall sacred or divine?

Is Mister Magistrate Hall's myrmidon-spy-and-blue-bottle-copying-clerk (who left his Christmas piece at home with his mother, and so floored the vice-mongers) sacred or divine?

Are the vice-mongering sneaking scamps, who can't muster a *name* among the lot, except the ugly ominous one of "*Medlicott*"—are these hole-and-corner fellows sacred or divine?

If not *sacred*, they are *profane*; therefore

according to Bow-street authority, if they show, publish, or display themselves in any public thoroughfare—a shop to wit—they may be hauled off to prison or be fined 40s. Oh! but its a profane *thing*, not a profane *person* that constitutes the offence. Then Mister Justice Hall's *vade mecum*, and the vice-ass-ociation's reports, and that big police-boy's copy-book are all profane publications.

Then, blue-bottles! do your duty, pull out your copy-books and copy down all the papers, books, and publications that are not in the bible.

The following are not profane because they are in the holy bible, therefore *sacred*:—

“Now therefore *kill every male* among the little ones, and *kill every woman* that hath known man by lying with him.” (Exodus, ii. 11, 12.)

“And he (Solomon) had *seven hundred wives*, princesses, and three hundred concubines.” (1 Kings xi. 3.)

“And they *utterly destroyed* all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.” (Jos. vi. 21, 22.)

“So they spread a tent upon the top of the house, and Absalom *went in unto his father's concubines, in the sight of all Israel.*” (2 Sam. xvi. 21, 22.)

“Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.” (Exodus xxii. 18.)

“Now therefore behold, the lord hath put a *lying* spirit into the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the lord hath spoken evil concerning thee.” (1 Kings, xxii. 23.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

I HOPE you will profit by Mr. Jardine's precept and Mr. Bruce's example. I trust you are ready to carry out fully the excellent law and morality which the bench has propounded. Begin by selecting various print-shops, and if any obscene plates, out of an obscene “old book,” are exhibited, go you into the shops and order the proprietors to remove them forthwith. Upon their failing to do so, you will know how to act “in a praiseworthy and legal manner.” Honor to the martyrs, we shall have an open stand-up fight yet. A PRIEST HATER,

Canterbury. Who knows them well.

.....How are those thieves serving you, do they still pay you a visit? It appears that you are denied protection by the magistrates—then by all the gods and devils that ever entered into the brain of man, I would protect my own property, and the next scoundrel that entered the shop and took forcible possession of anything, in opposition to my wishes, I would lay him dead at my feet, though I should walk to the gallows the next minute.—Birmingham. W.T.

THE EARLY CHRISTIANS AND THEIR OPPONENTS.

(Concluded.)

“THERE is (says Celsus) another absurdity of theirs (the christians), that when god shall throw a fire on the world, and all other things shall be destroyed, they alone shall remain; and that not only the living, but they also which have been ever so long dead, shall come forth out of the earth in their own bodies (or in the same flesh), which is no other than the hope of worms. For what soul of a man would desire a putrified body? Nor is this doctrine of yours agreed to by all christians, for many among you reject it as impure and abominable and impossible. For how is it possible, that a body which has entirely been corrupted, should return to its pristine constitution which it has once lost? To make flesh eternal is a thing so unreasonable, that god neither *can* nor *will* do it.” So much for Mr. Celsus, whose opinions the reader need hardly *now* be told were of a complexion to frighten rather than to please the christians. Gibbon has said,* “the objections, as stated by Origen (a well known opponent of Celsus, in whose book we find all that christians have left of the latter), from Celsus, is sometimes stronger than his own answers;” and here we have a good illustration of the remark, as the common sense view of immortal souls and putrid bodies, taken in the paragraph just quoted, admits of no reasonable answer. The christian emperors would have done well to burn the books of Origen, as well as those of Celsus, but they were bungling bigots after all. Keith truly says, that Origen adduces the objections of Celsus in order to refute them, but how very unlucky is the disputant who drags forward an objection, and then finds it too strong for him. Alas, poor christianity! when its most learned defenders are unconsciously its most terrible enemies. It is certainly not too much to say that the most ungenerous and bitter Infidels will freely make christians a present of *such* testimonials as those of Celsus, in *favour* of their scheme. Some knowing christians would willingly consign Celsus and his fragments to the devil. The famous Bentley is one of those. He has displayed much virtuous indignation against Celsus. “Are we (he exclaims) to fetch our notions of the sacraments from *scraps* of Julian and Celsus, or from the scriptures—the pure fountain, and what we read, know, and profess?” If it were my business to reply, I should say, certainly not. No good whatever is to be had from *scraps*, in any books published by christianity's opponents. Christians should stick to scripture, the *pure fountain*, and eschew all rea-

* Gibbon's History, vol. iv. p. 81.

soning, or if they can't help reasoning, why nothing will so effectually shield their christianity, as shutting out conviction or aping Goldsmith's good-natured man, who never reasoned without making up his mind *first*, upon the principle that then, there could be no harm.

Of Hierocles, Lardner thus writes,* "about the beginning of Dioclesian's persecution, another work was written against the christians, in two books, by Hierocles, a man of learning, and a person of authority and influence as a magistrate. He was *well acquainted with our scriptures*, and made many objections to them, thereby bearing testimony to their antiquity, and to the great respect which was shown them by the christians; for he has referred to both parts of the new testament, to the gospels, and the apostles. He mentions Peter and Paul by name, and *casts reflections upon them*. He did not deny the truth of our saviour's miracles; but in order to overthrow the arguments which the christians formed from them, in proof of our saviour's divine authority, and mission, he set up Apollonius Tyraneus, as a *rival or superior to himself*. But it was a vain attempt"—of course it was, most learned doctor. Nevertheless, 'tis lamentable, most lamentable, that the christians so *carefully destroyed his works*. Works in which, oh wonderful! he actually proves the antiquity of scripture, by mentioning it in terms of bitter contempt, and testifies to the astounding fact, that christians felt very great respect for that precious repository of their own superstitious jargon. Besides, he actually mentions Peter and Paul by name, and even casts reflections upon that noted couple, which of course tells mightily in favour of christianity. Nor did he deny the miracles of "our saviour," *only setting up the clever conjuror, Apollonius Tyraneus as his rival or superior in the presto, fly, begone business*. Verily these Lardners, Keiths, Hornes, *et hoc genus omne*, write as though they had resolved to spare Infidels all unnecessary trouble in the work of demolishing christianity's precious evidences. None have been more eminently successful in bringing all sorts of religion, and more especially the christian, into contempt, than these very learned and very pious writers.

Julian is the last whose writings against, or as Keith has it, whose testimony in favour of, christianity I have to notice. Indeed, it is impossible to speak of any others save hypothetically, as not even a "scrap" of the voluminous writings of many other once-celebrated anti-christian authors have escaped the general conflagration. Julian, it is well

known, was one of the most illustrious of Roman emperors; and those who would obtain an intimate knowledge of that great man's character should consult Gibbon, who, in "The Decline and Fall," has surpassed himself in his inimitable analysis of the *apostate* Julian, whose writings against the christian schemes are preferred by the most acute modern critics, to those of Porphyry, Celsus, or Hierocles. In his "Treatise against Christianity," says Keith* his "enmity to the gospel is most strikingly displayed, and his most *decisive testimony in its favor* is supplied in a manner of which he had as little presage as of the results of his Persian expedition." In illustration of this *manner*, I will select from the remains of his work, for the writings of Julian suffered the common fate of all those thought by christians in authority, inimical to the progress of their darling notions. "Jesus (says Julian, as quoted by St. Cyril) whom you (christians) celebrate was one of Cæsar's subjects. If you dispute it, I will prove it bye and bye; but it may as well be done now. For yourselves allow that he was enrolled, with his father and mother, in the time of Cyrenius; but after he was born, what good did he do to his relations? For they would not, as it is said, 'believe on him.' But yet, that stiff-necked and hard-hearted people believed Moses. But Jesus, who rebuked the winds, and walked on the seas, and cast out demons, and, *as you will have it*, made the heavens and the earth (though none of his disciples presumed to say this of him, except John only, nor he clearly and distinctly; however, let it be allowed that he said so), could not order his designs so as to save his friends and relations." (Luke xi.; John vii. 5; Matt. xiv. 25; Mark vi. 48; John i.)

"Jesus having persuaded (continues Julian) a few among you, and these the *worst* of men, has now been celebrated about three hundred years; having done nothing in his life time worthy of remembrance, unless any one thinks it a mighty matter to heal lame and blind people, and exorcise demons in the village of Bethsaida and Bethany.

"But you are so unhappy as not to adhere to the things delivered to you by the apostles, but *they have been altered by you for the worse*, and carried on to yet greater impiety. For neither Paul, nor Matthew, nor Luke, nor Mark, have dared to call Jesus, *god*. But *honest* John, understanding that a great multitude of men in the cities of Greece and Italy, were seized with this distemper, and hearing likewise, as I suppose, that the tombs of Peter and Paul were respected, and frequented, though as yet privately only, first presumed to advance that doctrine.

* See Lardner's works, vol. vii. p. 437, vol. viii. p. 158.

* See "Demonstration of the Truth of the Christian Religion," p. 3, 4, 7.

"But you miserable people, at the same time that ye refuse to worship the shield that fell down from Jupiter, and is preserved by us, which was sent down to us by the great Jupiter, or our father Mars, as a certain pledge of the perpetual government of our city; you worship the wood of the cross, and make signs of it upon your forehead, and fix it upon your doors. Shall we for this most hate the understanding, or most pity the simple and ignorant among you, who are so very unhappy as to leave the immortal god, and go over to a *dead Jew*?"

"*You have killed not only our people who persisted in the ancient religion, but likewise heretics equally deceived with yourselves, but who would not mourn the dead man exactly in the same manner that you do.* But these are your own inventions, for Jesus has nowhere directed you to do such things, nor yet Paul. The reason is, that *they never expected that you would arrive at such power.* They were contented with deceiving *maid servants and slaves*, and by them, some men and women, such as Cornelius and Sergius. If there were then any other men of eminence brought over to you, I mean in the times of Tiberius and Claudius, when these things happened, let me pass for a liar in every thing I say."*

I leave these extracts from the immortal Julian's work, to tell their own tale. "The elegance of the style," says Gibbon, "and the rank of the author recommended his writings to the public attention; and in the impious list of the enemies of christianity, the celebrated name of Porphyry was effaced by the superior merit and reputation of Julian."† Now, though it must be allowed that from policy or principle he paraded and practised some superstitions of his own, he clearly saw and cleverly exposed the trickish absurdity of christians, like Porphyry, Celsus, and Hierocles; Julian is, we have seen, complacently placed by Keith upon the list of those Heathen authors who, in *their way*, have borne testimony to Jesus Christ, and the things concerning him. Surely *noodleism* can no further go.

HINTS ON POLITICS.

I.

MAN, said Montesquieu, is born in society, and there he remains—obviously therefore it is of the first importance that he should be early made to understand his rights, his duties, in short, his position, as a member of society. The law of Solon, which made neutrality in politics a crime against the state, was an admirable law, for the citizen who is either too idle or too corrupt to watch

over the interests of his country, is unworthy to enjoy its privileges. He is no less a criminal than the soldier who sleeps at his post, or, in the heat of battle, skulks beyond the reach of shot. Society is an aggregation of individuals. Upon the social virtues and public spirit of each member, depends the happiness of all. Individualised man would be less strong, and far less happy than an individual tiger. He owes all his power and boasted superiority over brutes, to the instinct of association. Men, like wolves and horses, are naturally gregarious. The existence of clans, tribes, and nations, is proof of this. If men are not naturally gregarious, how came they to unite in the first instance? Whence arose the desire for union, if none felt or experienced that they could benefit by it. Man is as selfish an animal as any that prowls the African forests. When, as at present, the slave of error, he is intensely, mischievously so. "Society (it has been observed) was the result of our virtues, laws of our vices." Now, the mere creatures of instinct, have neither virtues nor vices, and such undoubtedly once was man. The instinct which impelled him to unite with the woman and with his fellows, had no more of virtue or of vice in it, than the instinct which impels bees to their hive, or ants to their hill. Voltaire has remarked, in relation to man's social or anti-social tendencies, that to conclude the human animal is by nature solitary, because individuals have occasionally been found in a state of isolation, would be a stroke of wisdom analogous to that of a traveller, who chancing to meet with a wandering bee, should at once declare all that lived in hives were depraved.

This was no doubt intended by Voltaire as a rap on the knuckles for his great rival, Rousseau, whose fate it has been to give offence to everybody, and scarce be understood by anybody. Rousseau has been accused of lauding *savage* and decrying *civilized* life; but if any of my readers will take the pains to study attentively his admirable book, "*L'Origine D'Inegalite parmi les Hommes*,"* they will soon discover, that its author has been shamefully misrepresented. The work is not faultless, but, taken as a whole, I will venture to pronounce it one of the most ingenious, profound, and useful, that appeared during the last century. It was the work that first set me a thinking in earnest, and I strongly recommend it to all who seek to obtain a clear idea of the probable origin of human society. Its meaning, or rather its leading idea, has been totally mis-understood. The *ideal natural man*, so pathetically and eloquently painted by Rousseau, is confounded

* Lardner, vol. vii. p. 625 to 630.

† Decline and Fall, vol. iv. p. 82.

* "The Origin of Inequality among Men."

by his critics, with the *artificial* but *too-real* *savage*. The isolated creature of instinct Rousseau loved to describe, has nothing whatever in common with any known human feelings, savage or civilised. *That* happy ignorance is better than miserable knowledge; *that* to have no ideas is better than to have false ones; *that* to diminish desires is to increase liberty; and *that* free animal man, guided by pure instinct is, or would be, as happier than a citizen slave, in all the pride of spurious reason—is happily and humourously enforced by him in his admirable book. To confound Rousseau's conceptional, incorrupted creature of instinct with the actual corrupted savages of North America, or New Zealand, is a gross and mischievous error.

From this slight sketch of Rousseau's leading philosophical views, it will be seen at a glance, that 'twas not the *savage* but the *atural* life he advocated, as better than he *social*. He considered, I think erroneously, every advance in civilisation, an actual retrogression in relation to human happiness. Truths, he maintained, come singly, errors run in crowds, and that men individually, or in the aggregate, never increase their stock of knowledge, without laying in a much larger stock of passion and prejudice. All which I hold to be thoroughly sophistical—for, in the first place, we know that so far from happiness retrograding as civilisation advances, the very reverse is the fact. The sophisms so commonly indulged in by certain radical politicians, about the good old feudal bacon-and-beer times, are delusive, contemptible, and mischievous. The working classes *should not be taught to look back*, for as regards them, at all events, there is nothing, absolutely nothing, in the past, worth the living or. We may be told, and told truly, that the free labourers of England are at this moment physically, and even morally worse conditioned than the slave negroes in our plantations. But give me free labour, with the sense, the eager desire of liberty, which seldom fails to accompany it, before all the advantages necessary, or incidental to slavery. The whip and collar system is worn out in this country, and may the memory of it be eternally execrated. I repeat it. The people should *not* be taught to look back. There never was a period in the history of this, or, indeed, any other nation, when the people were more or less than serfs. They are so now, it is true, but that the same political game has been played in all ages is less so. Nothing whatever is to be gained by a useful character, by making the present generation in love with "the flesh pots" of their feudal forefathers, or even the beer-and-bacon civilisation of a later period. What society wants, and what it must have, ere

serfdom, in *substance* as well as *name*, can be annihilated, is a knowledge of itself. The people must be taught *principles, definite political principles*. At present, there is no vitality in politics, no virtue in it. Politics, as a science, is not at all studied, and of consequence no better understood. Class interests are interwoven with the very existence of civil societies, and will last till all that is shall be swept away by the gradually advancing tide of knowledge. Class interests are the natural product of civil society, and class legislation is a no less natural consequence of class interests. From the same pestilential source springs the rage for party and faction, which is the disgrace of our national character. The voice of principles is unheard of amid the fury of partizanship, and uproar of fanaticism.

The people, taken in the aggregate, are woefully ignorant, or, what is still worse, heedless of political principle; and I am bound to say, their leaders are not one whit better. John Arthur Roebuck, member for Bath, said, in my hearing, at the time of the reform agitation, "Politics is a subject about which every body can prate;" a remark, the *tone* of which sensitive people may object to, but its *truth* none can gainsay, for if by prate be meant random talk, most undoubtedly politics is a subject about which every body can prate. Excepting only religion, there is more random talk about politics than all other subjects put together. There is hardly a tap or coffee-room without its swarm of statesmen, in the shape of a *posse* of interminable talkers about whigs going out and tories coming in; but from Christmas to Midsummer, and from Midsummer to Christmas, the most determinedly patient listener will not succeed in catching a single sentence about the best means of establishing political justice, irrespective of faction or party. The idea of *principles* never seems to enter their political heads. All is come-day, go-day, god-send-Sunday sort of work; and such it will continue, till a radical change can be effected in the opinions and habits of the reforming public. It is in vain that these questions are burked or blinked; the plain truth must be told at last, which is, that the people of England are at this moment in a state of moral as well as physical destitution; that they are by no means prepared to overthrow the present tyrannical government and establish a better on its ruins; that the parson-power of this nation must be nipped at its root before superstition will be compelled to make way for sound useful knowledge; finally, that educating the whole people honestly and scientifically, is the slow but only sure mode of ensuring to all the inestimable blessing of good government.

THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE.

The spirit of the age is investigation. Its philosophy is material; its leading characteristic dissent. Brains, like manufactories, give forth new products, the result of new processes. Progression in physical science has been rapid—electricity, magnetism, physiology, and phrenology present new lights. The world is being explored; we do not now, as our forefathers did, merely look to the surface; we seek new depths, new productions, which, as they appear, affect soil, climate, and character. Education too proceeds, not religious but useful; men are beginning to look beyond the narrow circle of the former. Education based on religion has produced poverty and crime, we must trust, for the future, to irreligious teaching.

The age is utilitarian. *Cui bono?* is the general query. Manufactories are before cathedrals, blankets before bibles, facts preferable to faith. Faith is retreating, as men investigate. Every one says, why believe in this or that? let us judge for ourselves. Then away goes crowns, crosses, and crosiers—all give way to the omnipotence of reason.

Religion has lost its mysteries; its miracles are gone, the charm is broken, the god-head vanished. Truth is first matter of opinion; this is the age of opinion, the fore-runner of truth. Doubts precede truth, and doubting is an element of atheism. Atheism is the result of investigation; that it advances we all know; its progress is proportionate to our knowledge; it is the lion of the day. Religion had its dogmas, it has now *its* doubts.

This is the age that is pulling down the banners of kings, priests, and others, on which were inscribed, *divide et impera*, and raising in their place the banner of "union." Tyranny is giving way to equality and peace.

The age is one of dissent; the episcopalian and presbyterian, the methodist and papist may shake hands, while the thousand and one sects look on with comparative indifference; but it is not from the love they bear each other, no, the pressure from without compels them to it.

This is a levelling age too, everything shows it. Gods and god-supporters have been abased, churches, mosques, and creeds are fast falling into contempt. Kingcraft, with all its attendant horrors and mummeries, should be a source of hatred to all right-thinking minds. "Live and let live," is superseding "long live the queen." By trampling down kings mount, and by levelling they rise. This is the principle with all monarchs, protection in their mouths, but tyranny in their hearts. Intellect is a destructive—of errors; but, at the same time, it is conservative of all that is worthy of preservation.

T.P.

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*Originally Edited by CHARLES SOUTHWELL, sentenced, on January 15, 1842,
to Twelve Months' Imprisonment in Bristol Gaol, and to pay a fine of £100, [PRICE 1D.*

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SCEPTICAL WOMEN.

HISTORY furnishes few specimens of sceptical women. The crowd of females "owe to their country their religion." This, it may be said, is also true of the harder sex, which I deny not; but certainly man is less the slave of feeling than woman, and hence his intellectual superiority. Women *feel* rather than *think*—and religion it is well known is rather an affair of *heart* than *head*. Woman is as inferior to man intellectually, as man is inferior to woman morally. The perfection of character would, if mixture were practicable, spring from their amalgamation. I deal here with generalities, under which Dr. Johnson has truly said, error lurks. Such errors, however, are unavoidable in the exposition of leading truths. Women *generally*, such is my position, are more the creatures of feeling than reason—while the converse holds in regard to men, who, in the aggregate, are more the creatures of reason than feeling. The irrationality (to speak paradoxically) of man's reason, the foolish manner in which he exercises it, proves no more against the predominance of a reasoning faculty in the male, relatively to the female, than does the gross perversion of feelings, in themselves admirable, disprove the predominance of the sensitive faculty in women. There are undoubtedly splendid exceptions to the rule here insisted upon, but exceptions pre-suppose the rule. Am I asked for evidence of this being the rule? My answer is, consult history—every page of which gives evidence of man's *intellectual* and woman's *moral* superiority. It is idle to talk about laws fettering female genins—for under all govern-

ments, short of absolute despotism, the field of poetry, music, and even of science have been open to women. The matrons and virgins of Greece and Rome, exhibited traits of heroism, virtue, and patriotic devotion, which would be the admiration of all ages—but where are their female geniuses—where are the legacies of their intellectual energy and inventive faculty? Where, in short, are we to look for those marks of extraordinary intellectual power in women, that men in almost every age and clime have so abundantly manifested? The champions of the intellectual equality of the sexes will be puzzled to say where. It is true, Semiramide and some other "unsexed" queens, did empty human veins by the million, and play tyrant despots with the nerve of Napoleon, and successful address of Sesostris—but all tradition and all history is silent as to the books of genius written by female hands. Invention, invention, invention! Women have always failed, they now fail, and in my opinion always will, to invent or create anything great or lasting in science or art. Can any reason be given why countless ages have not produced a single female poet, a single female sculptor, a single female musician, or a single female anything, requiring the highest order of intellectual genius? Can any other satisfactory reason be advanced, save this one—that the genius of woman is not intellectual, but moral—not so much a genius of knowledge, as a genius of feeling? I might ask what insuperable artificial obstacles have hindered the brain of woman giving birth to an "Iliad," an "Æneid," an "Inferno," or a "Paradise Lost?" What artificial obstacles have prevented the growth, in all soils, and all climes, of female Shaksperes, Miltons,

Dantes, Homers, Phidiases, Michael Angelos, Rosinis and Mozarts? I might ask a thousand such questions were it useful—and all that could be urged in reply, by the *soi disant* best friends of woman, would be, that she has been the slave of man from time immemorial—that “*man to man sometimes unjust, is always so to woman*”—that he has used his undoubted physical superiority to crush the intellect and outrage the sympathies of her he ought to have shielded, honoured, and loved—and that if woman were allowed fair play, if she were permitted freely to exercise her faculties, if she were the independent friend and not the slave of man, if, in short, she were equal with man *artificially*, she would speedily be so *naturally*.

Such is, in substance, the assertive reasoning of our present clever women, and those who lay claim to be considered the exclusive advocates of their rights. It is all very pretty, no doubt, looks well on paper, and is most excellent never failing claptrap, at popular meetings, but it is totally inconsistent with that knowledge of woman's character, gathered from the experience of ages. I would not, if possible, be misunderstood. My desire for the emancipation of woman is no less intense than the desire of those who take what I conceive to be a mistaken view of her peculiar characteristics. In common with all other accredited writers for this paper, I would abolish, at once and for ever, all those invidious, cursed distinctions which now prevail between, and it may be added, destroy in a great measure, the happiness of both sexes. But there are as surely natural and eternal distinctions between man and woman, as between the hawk and the dove, or the fir and the plantain. I say not there are *superiorities* or *inferiorities*, but *distinctive differences*, which no flattering sophistry can charm away. To me it seems as unwarrantable to say man is *superior* to woman, as it would to affirm that a lily is superior to a rose. A perfect man would be no more like a perfect woman, than is the lily like the rose—and monstrously unjust as well as foolish, are all political or social distinctions, founded upon sexual differences. If my will had the force of law, political distinction between man and woman should at once be swept away, when all others would speedily follow. Men never can be politically free, while women are morally degraded. Napoleon asked an illustrious French woman what France needed? *Mothers*, was the admirable reply. England needs *mothers now*, more, perhaps, than France did then. A nation of educated mothers would suckle a nation of free men—but he is a madman or a knavish politician who pretends to reform a state, without beginning with the education of its women. Education will not metamorphose them into

men, but 'twill do more, 'twill fit them to be “*bringers forth of men*.” Education will certainly never introduce us to female Homers, Phidiases, Shaksperes, or Farradays, but it will bring to perfection all those, admirable faculties of which their organism contains the germs—it will not destroy the feelings peculiar to the sex, but chasten and exalt them—it will not confer upon woman that solidity of intellect her sanguine advocates would lead us to believe she has hitherto been cheated of by society's injustice—but education will most assuredly improve her moral character, by strengthening her reason, and ultimately rescue her from the odious influence of those accursed superstitions of which women are everywhere at once the root and source. Women, in all times and climes, have been the right arm of priestcraft. The intensity and excess of feeling, predisposes them to be the recipients of notions, however wild or mischievous. Sceptical women, I have already said, are rarely to be heard of in history. Some two or three fluttered about the court of Louis Quatorze. It is probable there were more *femmes savans* in France during the eighteenth century, than in all the other nations of Europe taken together. Learned ladies, or *blues*, as they are sometimes ridiculously called, have been, up to a very late period, held in real or affected contempt by Englishmen, they now seem to be creeping into favour, and waxing more and more sceptical every day. I have not heard that any of our fair sceptics are positively atheistical, but a very considerable number have abandoned the faith *as it is in Jesus*, and openly avowed *pure deism*. Menage observes, “that history speaks of very few incredulous women, or female Atheists.” D'Holbach quotes this observation in his “System of Nature,” and adds, “this is not surprising their organisation renders them fearful—their nervous system undergoes periodical variations—the education they receive disposes them to credulity. Those among them who have a sound constitution, who have a well-ordered imagination, have occasion for chimeras suitable to occupy their leisure—above all, when the world abandons them, then superstitious devotion, with its attractive ceremonies, becomes either a business or an amusement.”

I do not very well understand how the possession of a sound constitution, with a well ordered imagination, can have or give occasion for any chimeras whatever. I rather think it is people who have *unsound* constitutions, and *ill* ordered imaginations that have occasion for chimeras suitable to occupy their leisure. The remark, methinks, should be set down as one of D'Holbach's very few *lapsus plumes*. It is the more remarkable, however, because no writers knew better than

D'Holbach and Diderot that, properly speaking, *there are no other than physical causes*—the obvious inference from which is, that a diseased or ill-regulated imagination is a consequence of diseased organism. To say a man has an unsound brain, is the same, in effect, as saying he is of unsound intellect. It is because the whole organism of woman is essentially and radically different from ours, that no art, no societarian arrangements, ever can place the sexes upon an *intellectual* equality. The moral differences between them will be found no less lasting than the physical ones. The other observations of D'Holbach corroborate my view of sexual differences. I shall return to this subject.

SUPERNATURALISM,

CONSIDERED AS A QUESTION OF MORAL INFLUENCE.

II.

THAT the opinions so fully *exposed* in my former paper upon this subject, were held and *conscientiously* acted upon by many sages of antiquity, no student of history need be told. In ancient India, as well as in Egypt and Greece, the belief in *many* gods was thought by the philosophic few so *morally influential*, and *politically necessary*, that any attempt to disturb it would have been deemed an act of madness—in short, the ancients attached quite as much importance to the *popular* belief in *many* gods, as modern *political-religionists* attach to the vulgar belief in *one* god. By *political-religionists*, are here meant the cunningly sagacious people of all countries, who teach that man must be systematically duped, before he can be *easily* and *safely* governed. Even the justly renowned Roman senate, which could boast a Cæsar, a Cato, a Cicero, and a Brutus, as its members, did not scruple to govern by the arts of deception. It *nourished* in the breasts of the common people, those very superstitious absurdities *itself* abjured and abhorred. It is doubtful whether a single member of that senate believed in the multitudinous gods of Rome. Voltaire, albeit, no friend to atheism, declared it an *assembly of Atheists*—for, said he, “men who neither *fear* nor *hope* anything from the gods, are *practically Atheists*”—an opinion I am disposed to admit the soundness of—for, *supposing* the reality of gods, it is difficult to make out of what *use* they can be, or in what *manner* connected with human beings who have nothing to *hope* nor to *fear* from them. At all events, just *such Atheists* composed that noblest of all political bodies, the Roman senate. Like Kant, and almost all other modern metaphysicians, the Roman philosophers rather considered the existence of a god or gods,

and the *imagined* immortality of the soul, as indispensable *credenda*, than established truths. Do we not know that Cæsar, in full senate, *in effect* denied the soul's immortality, when he urged, as a *valid reason*, why Cataline should not be put to death—that banishment would be a far greater punishment, death being but the annihilation of sensibility, which those who heeded not vulgar fables about a life hereafter, had no cause to dread? Do we not know that the senate, including Cicero the accuser and mortal enemy of Cataline, were convinced by that reasoning, and the traitor's life spared, upon the principle that perpetual banishment was a doom far more terrible, to a *reasonable* man, than death? It fortunately happens we are well acquainted with all this, and we know, besides, that these same rulers of the Roman world, were no more disposed than *our* rulers to relieve the *rabble*, the *scum*, and *dirt* of nations, as Cicero styled them, from the *salutary terror* of the gods. A hope of reward, and a fear of never-ending punishment, was, and is thought quite necessary for *them*. Peel and Wellington are just as convinced that the policy of deceit is a useful policy, as were Cæsar and Cicero. With what inimitable gravity did Judge Tindal lately tell the people of England, that “of religious teaching there can be no excess.” No judge ever said it better. All judges, black, white, or blue, ancient or modern, have been precisely of that opinion. They are all of one mind, soul, and strength upon that pivotal point. Paganini never found his one string more convenient and more profitable, than do judges, priests, and statesmen the one idea—“of religious teaching there can be no excess.” Morrison assured the public that of vegetable pills there could be no excess. And in the very same quackish spirit, and for the *selfsame object*, Judge Tindal, and all other judges, tell us, of religion there can be no excess. Go, those who can, to China, to Turkey, to Hindostan, or to Grand Tartary, and my life upon it, nothing in the shape of a judge, statesman, or priest can be found who is not most decidedly of opinion that of *religious teaching there can be no excess*—of course each of these worthy characters will not fail to name, as the religion to be taught, the superstitious notions most agreeable to his own prejudices, or his own interests, or both. Cicero and Cæsar thought the *mob* of Rome never could be full enough of what *we* call *Pagan idolatry*. They had just as high a notion of *paganism*, considered as a *state nostrum*, as our Peel and Wellington have of *christianity*. The former did not much care what *kind* of *paganism* the people were amused and bewildered by, all they were really anxious about, was *SOME* kind, effectual for the purpose. The latter are just as indifferent as

to the *sort* of christianity doled out to the multitude of fools—but *one* sort, at least, every honest man is expected to have—nay, one he *must* have, or *profess to have*, which answers *state purposes* almost as well.

Not to adopt *one* of the true christian faiths, and to stand boldly forward an avowed anti-supernaturalist, draws upon so unluckily-honest a wight the *odium theologicum*, which Lawrence *feelingly* denounced as “the concentrated essence of malignity and rancour.” In this particular of persecution, however, there is no analogy between the statesmen or people of ancient and modern times. Gods numberless, and religions innumerable, were sanctioned, or at least *tolerated* by Roman magistrates, whose philosophy was of so free, easy, and I am of opinion, *sensible* a character, that they put all religions upon the same footing, holding the scales of justice firmly but fairly betwixt them. From Gibbon we learn that the various religions protected, if not encouraged, by the Roman government, were thought by the people equally true, by the philosophers equally false, and by the magistrates equally useful. Before christians contrived to fix themselves firmly in the state saddle, purely religious persecution had never been heard of. No, barbarous as were the Pagans, they were speedily outdone in barbarity by the early christians. The christians were the first to teach religion *sword in hand*, and convince men’s understandings by torturing their bodies. I learn from *Le Commerce*, a French newspaper, that General Bugeaud, who commands in Algeria, had been strongly urged by a monk of La Trappe to *christianise* the Algerines. No, holy father, replied the general, the *sabre* first and then the *cross*—which I take to be an inversion of the good old order—for ancient, that is *early* christians introduced the cross first, and then the *sabre*—but “circumstances alter cases.” General Bugeaud no doubt has long since discovered that he can much easier and speedier cut down a thousand Algerines, than christianise one—so, upon the utilitarian principle, prefers, at this crisis, *sabreing* to *crossing*. Which christians *begin* with, is really not of much consequence, for they cannot go on smoothly without *both*. Their religion is not only taught by priests, sung by poets, lauded by philosophers, and believed by fools to be a *moralising* species of supernaturalism, but the *only* species that is so. The christians fiercely denounce all religions, “barring” their own, as diabolical inventions, and, of course, totally inimical to the morals of those unhappily subjected to their pernicious influence. They see clearly the mote in their neighbour’s eye, but not the beam in their own. That, however, can be no matter of astonishment to the student of human nature. He perfectly understands the lasting effects

of those early impressions which priests never fail to make, and the force of customs they have cunningly contrived to establish. The christian religion is admirably calculated to stultify the intellects and harden the hearts of its devotees. In common with all others, it erects faith into a virtue, and condemns the free exercise of reason.

It is the characteristic of almost *all* religions to *conquer* men’s understandings, but never to *satisfy* them. Then, how absurd is the proposition, that *morality can have no other basis than supernaturalism*. As well might it be contended that houses can have no other foundation than *sand*. What is more shift, unstable, and dangerous than strong imaginations, unbridled by a healthy and vigorous intellect? The grand aim of supernaturalism is to *exalt imagination at the cost of judgment*. Supernaturalism is the fever of our moral nature. It is not only *unnecessary*—considered as an element of progression, it is utterly *incompatible* with it. The genius of supernaturalism is despotic. Reason rejects it, for the genius of reason is liberty. No man can serve two masters—no people can serve two principles. There is no halting between the principle of imagination and the principle of judgment. The first is supernaturalism—the second is naturalism. A nation of Atheists would be a nation *governed by the law of reason*. Such a nation never yet existed upon earth, a people wise enough to do without priests, history furnishes no account of—but the fact is undeniable, and a momentous fact it is, that the power of the priest is uniformly in the direct ratio of popular vice. It will be shown, in due time, that in those countries where there is least religion there is most morality—where priests are *despised* virtue is *respected*—and where *hell* seems almost forgotten, the delights fabled of *heaven* seem actually realised upon *earth*.

REVELATION *versus* NATURE.

Christianity is the new light cast on the mysterious hieroglyphics of the universe. Exclude revelation light from creation movements and all is a riddle. Atheism is consistent in comparison.—*Fraser*, Oct., 1841.

THIS, coming from the most orthodox of all the god-journals, seems granting to atheism something like justice—although, in truth, atheism is not much honoured by its comparison with christianity. But let us see how “creation movements” look without revelation. Revelation presupposes a revealer—and the revealer must be material or immaterial. If material, what has he revealed? Has he revealed his own existence, where he resides, his form or powers, plans or intentions? The disputes in all countries—the thousands of different ideas of his ex-

istence and his essence—the massacres and wars—the feuds and animosities—all must answer in the negative. “I am that I am,” and “a hidden god,” is the only information said to have been given by the deity of the christians of himself, and to whom the writer quoted above evidently, in my opinion, refers, which revelation smacks very much of the “brogue”—but “his ways are unspeakable!” But what is the revelation ascribed to him? Does it give us any idea of a god of love, wisdom, justice, or omnipotence? By no means. In every revelation he is represented as a capricious being, protecting one favourite people, and at enmity with all the rest. If he appears to some, he is not “at home” to others—if he reveals his actions to a few, the great mass of the world are kept in a state of happy ignorance of his movements. The actions ascribed to this god, when not incredible, are by no means such as should astonish us—displaying no superior wisdom—his revelations, in fact, do not even promote the happiness of the people to whom they were made, and for whose comfort they were revealed. This is readily proved by an examination of the history of the Jews.

The evils flowing from christian revelation are greater, because more widely spread, than those having their source in the strictly Jewish dispensation. Over the whole of Europe and America it has rendered men unsocial, intolerant, and inhuman to one another, though they all profess to be guided by the same “new light”—which must assuredly be one from hell, judging from its infernal influence. What “new light” has “christianity cast upon the mysterious hieroglyphics of the universe?” What natural phenomenon did it elucidate—what assistance has it rendered science—what mysteries has it unravelled—and where are the translated hieroglyphics which christianity has deciphered? Not surely in the new testament, for if so, they have been translated from a language which men are hourly becoming masters of, into one the inexplicability of which increases with the study of it—for, upon its first promulgation the difference of opinion respecting its meaning, might be reckoned by units, now that nearly two thousand years have been devoted to its examination, the different interpretations may be computed by tens of millions. If christianity be the “new light” described, it would appear to have dazzled the eyes of those who have looked upon it, or, like a treacherous Will o’ th’ Wisp, led them on to the destruction of their own and every one else’s happiness, who has had the misfortune to be associated with them. The sooner Christ’s light is put out, the better for mankind.

“Exclude revelation light from creation movements (says our theologaster) and all is a riddle”—and “revelation light” is what

little boys call a “riddle-me-ree”—thus we have one riddle or mystery to explain another—and both pronounced to be inexplicable—how greatly are we advantaged then by the possession of this “new light”—it is the piling of an Ossa of absurdity upon an Olympus of doubt! “Creation movements” and “revelation light,” form a Gordian knot, so artfully interwoven by priests, that men have been for countless ages fruitlessly endeavouring to untie it, instead of severing it with the sword of Reason, by which means only can the latter be established supreme ruler over the moral world. Atheism is reason’s sword, which has already cut several coils of the priestly knot, and the rest will quickly share the same fate.

“Exclude revelation light from creation movements and all is a riddle!” What ignorance or impudence is contained in that sentence. Where is there a single circumstance, in the Jewish cosmogony, said to have had a divine revealer, which carries with it evidence of probability, when opposed to modern science? which it is well known entirely contradicts all the “creation movements” which the “revelation light” in the bible is said to unriddle. If the Jewish and christian fables are revelations from a deity, he has evidently related lies—and, inasmuch as that which never happened can never be revealed, it follows that the Jewish and christian revelations are no revelations.

T. P.

THE PAST, PRESENT, & FUTURE OF THE SOCIALIST AGITATION.

WE beg to call the attention of our readers to the following extracts from the late numbers in the *New Moral World*.

1. “In proportion as our lecturing staff has been reduced, and a more measured tone and cautious policy adopted, so has the popular feeling waxed cold, and popular support diminished.”—*G. A. Fleming*, November 19, 1842.

2. “Short work should now be made with the theology of the world. This is the course pursued in my present lectures, and it is telling its old tale.”—*Robert Owen*, December 3, 1842.

3. “The truth is, that our religion and our calicos are equally worthless—they are manufactured and exported on equally vicious principles—made for sale and not for use.”—*G. A. Fleming*, December 10, 1842.

We once more resume this subject, not for the purpose of finding fault, but for the purpose of vindicating writers in the *Oracle of Reason* from the charges of faction, and a desire to thwart the objects, or at least a

portion of the objects of the Socialist association, by advising their members to engage in theological discussion. The extracts quoted at the head of this letter, have been condemned by no party possessing any influence in Socialist affairs, but seem, on the contrary, approved of by all. Many other signs of improvement could be gathered from the recent proceedings of the society—we merely cite one as a specimen. Two years since, the Edinburgh Socialists condemned the proceedings of those of Leicester, in some very strong resolutions, because their missionary held an occasional discussion on the bible. Now, the Edinburgh Social missionary is both allowed and encouraged to follow what his supporters then condemned.

The readers of the *Oracle* are well aware that this paper was established for the purpose of opposing the religions of the world, in principle and detail, and that it has carried out the warfare with persevering zeal, for the last twelve months, through good and through evil report, during which time it has had to contend with the open hostility of enemies, and the lukewarmness of friends. Many of the Socialists, in particular, looked upon it with a jealous eye, because in it their policy was strongly condemned. These parties will find that even Mr. Owen now recommends that we should "make short work with the theology of the world," because it is one of the greatest, if not the greatest curse that ever afflicted the human race. There is no paper that makes such "short work" with theology as the *Oracle*, for it is destroying it root and branch—there is, therefore, no paper more deserving of Socialist and Infidel support. If the paper itself is worthy of support, so are they who have suffered, and are suffering for its sake. And yet, many who wish to destroy supernaturalism, do not think it necessary to exert themselves in the least degree in this respect—had it been otherwise, Southwell would not have had to depend upon the generosity of a single individual to supply, *at least, half his wants*—nor should we have heard the cry of poverty from Gloucester gaol, because the martyr of truth within its walls could not obtain that which was necessary to keep him in a state of health. The *Oracle* was condemned by the followers of Mr. Owen because *he* disapproved of the course its projectors thought proper to pursue—it is to be hoped that now, when Mr. Owen thinks differently, the *Oracle* and *New Moral World* may fight the battle of human emancipation without collision, and that there may be no dissension in our ranks, all our energies being concentrated for the purpose of destroying the common foe. "It is full time (says Mr. Owen in the letter referred to) to abandon *all the childish foolishness of theology, and the fa-*

bric which it has hitherto been the means of constructing." Fleming, too, as lately will be seen, declared that the temporising policy so much condemned in the earlier pages of this paper, had been the cause of the decline of the Socialist agitation. Strange that this fact should not have been discovered before November, 1842, when it was so evident to all who had thought seriously and comprehensively on the subject, and who had the welfare of the society at heart, and who sought by means of theological controversy to increase its means, usefulness, and power. Mr. Owen's objection to theological discussion, this time last year, was, that it created hostile feelings between the contending parties—and so it does to a certain extent—but, if it is to be abandoned because of this, discussion or any other subject should be abandoned, too, and thus improvement would be retarded in its course. 'Tis true that theological disputes are more furious than others, in a general way, but, like the storms in the material world, they purify the atmosphere, and thus effect substantial good. Mr. Owen's object is to establish charity for the feelings and convictions of all, a *noble object*, but one that will never be accomplished while theological standards are to guide us in all we say and do, nor will the world ever be *politically* reformed until these false guides are abandoned, and science substituted in their stead. Theology is a curse, because it is founded on erroneous notions of the nature and destiny of man—science teaches what his nature is, and how his destiny may be fulfilled, and is therefore a blessing. I do not mean to say that Mr. Owen now approves of a *detailed* denunciation of supernaturalism, but the principle once conceded that theological controversy is necessary, the *mode* of conducting it must be left to the individuals who engage in it. My opinion is, that if religionists will not meet Socialists on their own grounds; that they should meet them on theirs, as discussions on these subjects invariably effect a vast amount of good. When I have recommended the study of the politics and morals of socialism to young inquirers, I have met with a reply to this effect—"I am almost satisfied on those points, it is the other part, its opposition to theology, and the justifiable or unjustifiable nature of that opposition that I am in doubt of." I much question if we should have had one Socialist for a thousand that we have now, if we had shunned talking with theologians from first to last. Socialism itself, when fairly considered, is the very essence of scepticism—why then should Socialists fear the name of sceptic being fastened upon them? General scepticism in theology (independent of its being proper in itself) is demanded by the exigencies of the times, as we find that the empire of faith is seeking

more than ever to prevent the growth of human reason; 'tis true the method of checking it is not so atrocious as it used to be in by-gone days, but the spirit manifested is precisely the same, and therefore calls for watchful, unceasing, persevering, and determined opposition, even for the sake of religionists themselves. The fact that the *Oracle* alone has struck alarm into the enemy's camp throughout its career, is a sufficient proof that the foe we seek to destroy is not invulnerable, and that our success is certain, if our aim is sure. To make our aim sure, we should demand the strongest possible proofs of everything advanced on the theological side, concede nothing without argument—do not let theologians assume either the spirituality of man or the spirituality of god. Thomas Paine fought at a disadvantage, when he admitted the existence of god, &c., and from that circumstance, and that alone, has "Watson's Reply" all its force—Paine certainly did much in his day, but he would be considered a mere whig in theology, had he written in 1842. Confirmed diseases are not to be cured by half-and-half measures. Phrenologists now perceive this—they have sought to gain over the religious world, either by twisting their science or stating but a small portion of the truth—they have failed, and are now adopting a bolder and honester course. Engledue has set the example, no one of any note presuming to condemn. These signs are worth recording, for they intimate a desire to establish a state of mental or moral health, let us take care that the phrenologists are not the only pioneers of freedom, but rather let us try to outstrip them in their efforts to do good. By refuting minor doctrines, we merely change the form of superstition, but by taking away the groundwork—god—we totally destroy. This is very desirable, for when god ceases to be thought of, man will be attended too as he ought to be, but not before. I do not recommend that god should be removed from the human mind, merely from a desire to wage war with things as they are, but for the purpose of giving man the means and the inclination of establishing permanently the happiness of his race. The time now lost in propounding theological notions, would of itself be sufficient to accomplish this in a very short period, if properly spent.

Before concluding these remarks, I wish to suggest to the writers of the *Oracle* the propriety of treating the question of god as a question of *influence* more than they have hitherto done—the world will either be better or worse for the removal of superstition, that is certain—why not, then, endeavour to show the probable results? An excellent opportunity is now afforded for this by the introduction of a political feature in the pages of the *Oracle*. Could a more useful

series be commenced than one showing the influence of superstition upon political tyranny? If it can be shown that god and tyranny stand in the same relation to each other as cause and effect, and they most certainly do—this would be the way to enlist the politicians generally on the Infidel side of the question. I take it, that the reason why reformers have effected so little, has been because each party have been so wrapped up in their own ideas that they have been, if I may be allowed the paradox, *exclusive* seekers of *general* reform.

It will be seen that the policy approved of twelve months ago, is now disapproved of, and has, in fact, been generally abandoned. We trust that this is the last change that will take place, and that, in future, no one will be able to say that sceptics are either afraid of their principles or their name. It is idle to attempt to disguise the fact, that orthodox believers are *not to be found* in the Socialist ranks. It is also a fact, that every Social missionary that has written for the press, has taken the sceptical side of the question. With this fact staring every one in the face, how can it be expected that they will be considered in any other light than as enemies of religion? Let them and Socialists generally appear on all occasions as they really are, and they will succeed—but let them ever attempt to wear the cloak of hypocrisy, or show the "white feather," and they will be sure to fail—these conclusions are warranted by all the experience we have gained.

J. C. F.

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of the Oracle of Reason.

SIR.—I had the pleasure a few days ago to congratulate you on escaping from the claws of injustice—but the halloo is on—the trained hounds scent human blood, and you are a sure victim. The "determination to annihilate you" is expressed by the legal functionaries of priests and tyrants. Law and lynch-law are at work—set in motion by the steam of bigotry—and Bow-street magistrates are *directed* to "put the pestilence down." Still I congratulate you, that you then escaped from the fangs of injustice—for the cause in which you are embarked—the cause of free inquiry and of truth—has benefitted by the events which have transpired, consequent upon your first triumph.

The daily press, without an exception, I believe, was too dastardly to vindicate the law—and while the public individually expressed their abhorrence of the Jardine-justice, I waited, with alarm and disgust, for a week, before I read any manifestation of spirit or sense of justice in the writers of the

press. The weekly press nobly did its duty, with few and insignificant exceptions.

The publicity you have obtained for the subject, will amply repay you for the temporary and trifling injury you have sustained—and the flagrant violations of law and justice which have daily been perpetrated during the last week, must, in this age of comparative enlightenment, soon procure a permanent advantage—for if I understand you principles, you do not care to be *struck*, so that you can be *heard*. The chief difficulty is to persuade the reasoning animal to look or think on the other side. This your agitation, or rather the malignant agitation of the indiscreet enemies to inquiry will produce, and thus the grand object is half obtained.

I write on the eve of Christ's day. How he was buffeted, banished, and, at an early age put to the torture and crucified, all christians know—and for what? for teaching doctrines incompatible with the interests of the powers of the day. So was it with Epicurus and Socrates, with Galileo and Lawrence. But what examples can suffice? Interest and ignorance have ears more deaf than adders. Reason must be prostrate before blind faith—why? Demetrius answers with his crowd of image-makers. Count the parsons in this small island, reckon their gains, and you find the cause of resistance. It is simply deception to facilitate plunder.

“Put you down,” however, is more easily said than done. It is easy to say, snuff out truth—extinguish nature. But the pure air will still invigorate, and truth must triumph in her struggle with error.

The ministers of British law, as all our history testifies, were *commanded* by kings and priests to stifle inquiry and crush the growth of freedom. Obedient slaves to the will of tyranny, they violated their sacred oaths to the people, broke faith with their god, and became self-convicted perjurers and traitors to their country. The judges now are independent of the crown, and therefore less truckling to power, and it is a rare thing of late years to find, even on a special commission or special occasion, a judge grinning with fury at the wretched offenders, and while expressing his grief that he could not “hang or burn the wretches,” stigmatising the legislature “that they were not half so savage as they should be.” From these sources we may hope for *law*, if not always enlightened justice, but when was bigotry or tyranny satisfied with the law, however oppressive?

When a victim is pointed out, mark the spurs to vengeance—attacks of various kinds, by anonymous priests or bigots, are printed, magistrates and ministers are goaded on to persecute—by whom? By themselves or their myrmidons—and these attacks are often invented to palliate the violation of

right. Throughout the annals of our history observe the blood-thirsty interposition of kings and priests, by *letters* and *directions*, in the process of the law. Justice was never allowed her free and unfettered course.

Law and lawyers, I said, are set to work. Yes, lynch-law, by magistrate-lawyers, who admit they are acting under government instructions. And is it come to this? Do the sworn officers of the law confess the majesty of lynch-law? Under the directions of government, a tory government—magistrates are now advising men—according to their private notions—to take the law into their own hands, and not wait for the tardy process of its administration through its appointed officers. Why, what other than this is the physical force argument in politics, so very unpleasant to the few? yet both arguments are identical, and must be quoted on all future occasions—for this monstrous decision has met the approval of the daily press. I congratulate you, your friends and readers, that you were not in the way when this imbecile Knight made his attack upon your windows, for I should be sorry that a useful and worthy man should have suffered on account of such a *thing*—do not understand me to imply, through his *safely threatened* chastisement in your absence—I mean, from the vengeance that would have been heaped upon you for the drubbing you would have given this small knight with the viceful face, who did not even stand by the windmill of his holy war, but took refuge from a child in a pastrycook's shop.

Thrice happy father of such a son of promise, exclaims the peddling bigot of the *Standard*, in a long twaddling leader. Thrice happy people of England, say I, who pay this lucky *Knight*-father £5000 a year to teach his *Knight*-son bigotry and lynch-law. And thrice more happy people of England, who pay Messrs. Jardine, Hall, and Twyford £2400 more to administer lynch-law under government directions.

I observe by the daily police reports the work is fermenting. Jardine has done us yeoman's service. This is all good, and Mr. Twyford's oath business with the boy must set them more work. The priests are gloating for vengeance—I long to see how they will look at the *hearing* to-day. A merry Christmas to you, and happy new year, with prosperity to the *Oracle*—this, by such conduct as you and those who assist you are displaying, will be certain. Z.

December 24th, 1842.

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THE ORACLE OF REASON: Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

“FAITH’S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE”

EDITED BY THOMAS PATERSON.

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BOW-STREET POLICE-OFFICE.

SATURDAY, DEC. 24, 1842.

(Reported especially for the Oracle of Reason.)

This being the day on which Mr. Thomas Paterson, bookseller, of No. 8, Holywell-street, was to appear at this office and answer to four summonses preferred against him for exhibiting certain profane placards in his window, to the annoyance of the neighbourhood and the public—the court was crowded with persons anxious to hear the charges.

Mr. Twyford was the presiding magistrate. Mr. Hall was also on the bench.

The name of Mr. Paterson having been called within and without the court three times, and no answer having been given—

Mr. Montague Chambers, who appeared for the prosecution, said he should at once proceed with the case, without the defendant’s presence. He then called—

Police-constable Thos. Boyd, T 6, who proved the serving of four summonses upon Mr. Thomas Paterson, upon the Tuesday previous, at half-past two in the afternoon.

The chief clerk then read the summonses, at the conclusion of which a gentleman in the body of the court said “hear.”

Mr. Twyford, in an angry tone of voice, ordered the person to be brought before him, and he would punish him.

A gentleman was then brought up and put in the defendants’ place. Some witnesses were called to prove that he was the person who called out “hear,” and as he refused to give his name, Mr. Twyford ordered him to leave the court, which he did.

Mr. Chambers then said—Sir, I beg to call your attention first to the act of parliament. You are probably aware that the proceedings now taken are under two acts—one the metropolitan police-force act, and the other the act for regulating the police-force in the metropolis. Before I proceed to read these acts, I think it becoming and fit, on the part of those for whom I appear, who are extremely anxious that the law should be put in force against delinquents of this description, to inform you that there is no

power beyond the law, enabling the government to take up these matters—and whenever they feel called upon to act against the queen’s subjects, however they may misconduct themselves, they cannot make a law for the express purpose—but it behoves them to act upon the statutes as they at present exist. I make these observations, to point out how mistaken some are with respect to the notion that the government desire to deal leniently with such an offender. That is not the desire of the government, nor was it the intention of the party whom I represent, to express any such sentiment. On the grounds of purity, justice, morality, and having due regard for that religion which is part of the law of the land, they are determined to suppress that which they consider to be most injurious to the morals and religious feelings of the well-ordered part of the community. But it does so happen—and it may become the subject of future consideration with those who are to make the laws, which are for the protection of the well-ordered portion of the community—that the powers which are entrusted to you, and on which you alone can act, are very limited indeed—and the course which the act of parliament prescribes is a very strict course, and it is not always possible to reach persons who undoubtedly are offenders. In the first place I will direct your attention, in support of this observation, to the extent of your power. All that can be done summarily by a magistrate, is to fine offenders of this description in the small amount of 40s. for each offence—a penalty certainly by no means equal to the seriousness of the offence. In the second place, in order to enable the magistrate to do that, it will be seen, on looking at the act of parliament, that two or three preliminary steps must be taken, and certain proofs must be presented to his attention. The offence consists in the exhibiting of placards of a profane nature in a public place or thoroughfare, in view of persons passing along such thoroughfare, and to the annoyance of the neighbourhood or passengers. In order to get at the offender, you must prove of course that he has exhibited, or caused to be exhibited, such placards. In

order to proceed against him, it is essential, in one view of the case, that the summonses should be served on him personally, or at his usual place of dwelling, upon some of the members of his establishment, named in the act of parliament—and until you have succeeded in making out these matters to the satisfaction of the magistrate, you cannot proceed to ask him to convict the offender. I mention this for the purpose of vindicating, if vindication were necessary, the course I pursued upon the last occasion, when I had the honour of appearing here. The summons, I may venture now to say, though it did not become my duty then to state it, was, in my judgment, as a lawyer, ineffectually served—and therefore, if I had pressed the magistrate on that occasion to proceed to a decision, I should have departed from my strict line of duty and have attempted to stretch that law of which I was seeking to enforce obedience. The summons was left upon Thursday evening, at the shop of the delinquent, and there was a question upon that occasion whether there was sufficient evidence to prove that it had been left at his usual place of dwelling, and served upon such party as was described by the act. In the second place, the party being represented to be out of town, and there being no reason to believe the representation to be untrue, but, on the contrary, there being every reason to suppose that it was founded upon truth, the ordinary rule which must govern all magistrates, no matter what the offence may be with which a party is charged, and which by the superior courts has always been laid down in protection of all subjects of this kingdom, must of necessity prevail, namely, that the party must have the summons brought to his notice or knowledge, and that he must have reasonable time to appear to answer to that summons, before proceedings can be taken against him in his absence. It was represented that he was in Gloucester, and it was therefore quite obvious to every person who reasoned properly, that if the summons was not served till Thursday night, the probability was that it would not be sent off till the post of Friday, and at the very time that he was called upon to appear here on Saturday, he might for the first time have known that such a summons had been issued. At all events, if he read it upon the arrival of the post at Gloucester on Saturday morning, he could not have reasonable time to attend here and answer the requisition of the summons. It was therefore essential and proper—though there is no disposition to exercise undue lenity, nor will there be such a disposition upon the part of those I represent—when it was suggested, that the party should not have it in his power to say, “you have adopted towards me an illegal and unjust course, be-

cause if I had had it in my power I would have been present; but you make a law to meet my express offence”—that a decision should not have been pressed. But now we stand in a different position, and I am about to ask you, sir, to go into the case, to examine witnesses, as the party does not think fit to appear, and to proceed to give your judgment—and if you shall give your judgment against him, and say he has committed the offence with which he is charged by this information, that you shall grant your warrants, and that he be brought forward upon those warrants to be dealt with according to law. I will now direct your attention to the act of parliament by which this offence is created, and by which the penalty is incurred; it is the 2nd and 3rd Vic. c. 47, s. 54. You will perceive, as soon as I read the clause, that your powers are limited, and that the punishment is inadequate to the offence. By the 54th section, there is a general enactment, and then there are certain sub-heads which declare certain acts to be offences. “And be it enacted that every person shall be liable to a penalty of not more than 40s., who within the limits of the metropolitan police district shall, in any public place or thoroughfare, commit any of the following offences.” It proceeds then to enumerate many offences, all being offences which are to be committed in a thoroughfare or public place—and under the twelfth sub-head is this enactment, with respect to the offence now charged against the defendant. “Every person who shall sell or distribute, or offer for sale or distribution, or exhibit to the public view any profane, indecent, or obscene book, paper, print, drawing, painting, or representation, or singing any profane, indecent, or obscene song, or ballad, or shall write or draw any indecent work, picture, or representation, or utter indecent, profane, or obscene language, to the annoyance of the inhabitants or neighbourhood.” That is the sub-head under which the offence with which the defendant is charged ranges itself. He is, in substance, charged with exhibiting to public view a profane placard, and that in a public place or thoroughfare, to the annoyance of the passengers. Now, that is the clause which creates the offence; and there is another act of parliament under which your power arises to deal with the offence, by a process which you shall issue, and the proceeding you shall resort to, that process being disobeyed. The power which you have, in case of the party not appearing, and the course you shall take to make him appear, are regulated by the 2nd and 3rd Vic. c. 71, s. 19. Now, sec. 19 provides for your being enabled to proceed in the absence of the party, if he shall have been duly summoned. It enacts, that on any infor-

mation or complaint being laid or made before any magistrate, on any matter on which the said magistrate has anything to decide, a summons may issue, and if the party do not appear according to the tenor of that summons, any one of the said magistrates, may, on proof of the service of the summons, proceed, in all cases which are not of a criminal nature, if there be no sufficient reason for the non-attendance of the party, to hear and determine the case in the absence of the party; and in all criminal cases—that part of the clause which may probably become the subject of your consideration—he shall issue his warrant for bringing such party before him, that the said information and complaint may be heard and determined.

Mr. Twyford—Do you want me to do that now?

Mr. Chambers—I think, sir, that is the proper course, always premising that there is no intention, or ever will be any to excuse the party here charged, and if I could possibly think that you could proceed safely to hear and adjudicate in the absence of the party, I would ask you to do so. The clause to which I directed your attention provides for cases which are and are not criminal. His case, I think, ranges itself under the head of criminal.

Mr. Twyford—Certainly.

Mr. Chambers—If it be, then I need not occupy your attention by going into evidence upon the facts of the case, but I shall simply call upon you, the service of the summonses being proved, to issue your warrant to apprehend and bring the party before you—and then, when the party is apprehended and brought before you, the case will be heard and adjudicated on—and perhaps, looking at the latter passage of the clause, you would say that it is not necessary for me to do more at present than to prove, as I have already done, the service of the summonses, to call upon you to issue your warrant in each case distinct, in order that the party may be apprehended on one of the warrants, or all of them. Before I proceed to ask you to do that, forgive me for directing your attention to what is the nature of those charges. It has been probably with great disgust and annoyance you have been compelled to listen to the statement of the contents of the papers which have been published. It is necessary, however, that you should do so, and I fear, that in the exercise of your duty, before I ask you to grant your warrant, that you should here read the contents of the other summonses.

Mr. Twyford—Yes. I was going to say, we must have the four notices distinctly proved.

Mr. Chambers—Yes. I am afraid so, for though Mr. Paterson has kept out of the

way, and though, probably, from some information which I have received this morning, that these proceedings have lead to the possibility or the probability of the suppression of the nuisance—yet, at the same time, those who listen to me, who call themselves the friends of Mr. Paterson, and I have no doubt there are some, must understand that we shall never be tired, that we shall never cease our exertions till that abominable, and disgraceful, and infamous nuisance is most effectually suppressed. I shall, therefore, call upon you, if you please, having gone through proof of the serving of the summonses, and having them read, to grant a warrant in each case.

The clerk then read the substance of the three other summonses—and Mr. Twyford issued four warrants for Mr. Paterson's apprehension, which were entrusted for execution to the care of active officers of the police-force.

BRUCE-LAW AND THE HOLYWELL STREET SHOP.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

He would be a bold writer, and a bad man, who should *now* venture to deny the existence of a fact long disputed by the wilfully blind, and by them only, namely, that in this country public justice bears a Janus-like aspect; and, while, on the one side, she exhibits her frowns to the poor man, has ever, on the other, a smile with which to temper her intercourse with the rich one. With us the poor and friendless ever meet justice, in her winter garb and coldest temperament—*austere*, lofty, and unbending—the privileged—are, on the contrary, ushered to her presence only to meet her most pitying smiles, and listen to her most gentle admonitions. Does a starving outcast, in his struggle for food, infringe the strict line of decorum marked out for him by the law—justice casts off the bandage from her eyes, and is ever ready with her sword to strike, that society may be protected. Does a wealthy ortitled transgressor trample down the barriers that separate men from monsters?—does he violate the public peace, or wantonly infringe rights of property?—justice draws the fillet still closer over her eyes, and, in her blindness, cannot discover the heinousness of the offence. The alleged wrong has been “inadvertently” committed, or it has arisen from “the impulses of a generous nature;” or some other plea is ever ready to excuse the *protege* of class legislation, and show the world, if possible, that those who make the laws are superior to them, and, as far as punishment extends, are allowed to be almost exempt from their operation.—*Lloyd's Illustrated London Newspaper.*

BRUCE LAW.—We are indebted to Mr. Knight Bruce, the son of the equity judge, for an example which, if generally followed, will relieve the public of many burdensome establishments, and will produce a complete revolution in society, restoring it to a state from which it may be said to have departed from the first date of civilisation.

Mr. Knight Bruce, seeing something offensive in a shop window, takes the law into his own hands—the law in his hands being a stick—breaks the windows, and carries off the placard in triumph. The shopman, who had some obsolete notion that the property of every one was entitled to protection, took this virtuous young gentleman to Bow-street police-office, but the magistrate, the excellent Mr. Jardine, who knows better than any other justice living how to treat a gentleman, as Mr. Bankes can testify, instead of entertaining the complaint, extolled Mr. Bruce for his spirited act, and thanked him for the public service he had rendered. Truth is stranger than fiction, indeed, for here is gravely outdone what we have admired in the pathetic ballad of the faithless “Billy Taylor,” summarily shot by his true love “with the lady walking in his hand,” and

“When that the captain came for to know it,
He very much applauded what she had done.”

For the captain we have only to substitute the name of Jardine, to change the sex of the actor, and the poetic justice of the Grub-street bard and the peculiar justice of the Bow-street magistrate are one and the same—

“When that the Jardine came for to know it,
He very much applauded what Bruce had done.”

But an act declared so useful and meritorious should not be solitary. Let every man, to the best of his opportunities, do likewise. Let every man, when he sees what he thinks wrong, employ the force of his own hands to put it down. There is lynch-law in America, let us have bruce-law in England, not the law of the Bruce the vice-chancellor—heaven forbid!—but the law of Bruce the son. Let every well-disposed subject imitate what Bruce did and Jardine approved. *Non omnia possumus omnes*, we cannot all break windows in which irreligious placards are displayed, but there are many other objects of wrath for a virtuous zeal. Let us only proceed on the simple rule of taking the law into our own hands, and we shall never want subjects for our summary jurisdiction. An attack on the gaming-houses—aye, and the gaming-clubs too—would merit praise. There are divers other haunts not famed for virtue which might be pulled down, to the great honour of the assailants’ zeal for morals—a thousand wrongs are daily done which might be summarily chastised—nay, the thing might be carried to the pitch of excellence of hanging some one at the lamp-posts now and then. The people did so in France when they took the law into their own hands. As for the magistrates, their function, or what might or should be their function, being transferred to the public in general, and to any one in particular having the whim to perform it, their business should be henceforth simply and solely

to award the praise they think due to meritorious outrages. After a time the magistracy may be abolished altogether, and the money saved—but in the first working of the bruce-law, before the public have quite got into the right way of it, the magistrates may be useful in teaching the young idea of violence how to shoot, in training and directing outrage, in showing brute force *quid utile, quid non*.

Mistakes might be committed in the first burst of license and zeal. Some one might take it into his head that the Marquis of Hertford’s will in Chancery is as great a scandal to morals as an Infidel scurrility in a shop window. The elegant irregularities of the rich, too, might be liable to the attacks of unrefined puritans—so, till the public shall have got into train, it may be well to retain the magistracy, just to show, as Mr. Jardine does, what outrages are praiseworthy; but when once this is a little understood, the whole of the judicial and police establishments may be swept away; indeed, for that matter, the whole machinery of government may be dispensed with too, the expense saved, and a return made to that good old primitive state in which every man was his own justice, the redresser of what seemed wrong to him, and force the only rule. The cowardice of requiring protection will then be at an end—a circumstance which will conduce greatly to the national bravery.

It is especially remarkable, that we owe the idea of this great reformation and new order, or new disorder of things, to the son of a judge who has, perhaps, in the paternal example, had peculiar opportunities of seeing the fallacy of justice. Mr. Knight Bruce knew how much better than his father was the stick in his hand. It would be curious to contrast the proceedings of father and son at the same moment, the father sitting on the bench in equity, and the son smashing the shop windows to the admiration of Mr. Jardine. Certain it is that no one has ever praised Sir Knight Bruce’s doings in his court, and Mr. Jardine has extolled the greater services of his son in the streets. The father, with a father’s pride, may be proud to see himself so outdone by his son. And by a beautiful dispensation, the services of the two were had together, the one being sitting while the other was walking, the one cudgelling his brain for reasons for a judgment, while the other was cudgelling a shop window. But how much more efficient the latter! As a bird in the hand is said to be worth two in the bush, so a stick in the hand should be rated as of more worth than any number of sticks on the bench. The symbol of justice, of old, was the bundle of rods—it is now single-stick. Bruce-law, then, for ever!—*Examiner*.

Simultaneously with the publication of the case of Mr. Knight Bruce and the blasphemy vendors, in yesterday’s paper, we expressed our warmest feelings of enthusiastic admiration for the *more than manly*—the *nobly christian*—conduct of the young gentleman named, in making a spirited and decided attack on a foul and pestilent den of hideous profligacy.... Every one will approve of the course adopted by the magistrate, in dealing with the case upon its substantial merits, instead of measuring it by the strict rule of legal technicality.... The remedy has been pointed out, and is it within the circle of possi-

THE ORACLE OF REASON.

ilities that any judicial tribunal *in this christian* and would hold the shadow of its protection over the outrages of the *miscreant* against whose windows Mr. Knight so properly introduced the *argumentum ad locum* &c.... We are told that the report inserted in yesterday morning's paper has been cut out and exhibited conspicuously in the window of the blasphemy shop. Here, then, is something for St. Clements to take in hand. Here is a display of determined and ostentatious obstinacy by a *ruffian who ought long since to have been bundled, neck-and-crop*, from the spot where he thus defies public sentiment, and scoffs at the very name of morality and religion.... Is the audacity—the all-but popularity—of the beings who deal in these base wares to be taken for one of the “signs” of the age?—*Morning Post*.

THE HOLYWELL-STREET NUISANCE. — Your valuable remarks of this date upon the unaccountable slowness of the government to prosecute in the above case have anticipated much that I would otherwise have submitted to your readers. One point, however, you have passed unnoticed. Mr. Chambers intimated, it is true, that if the renewed summonses were not obeyed warrants would issue, but he added, “that is, provided that Mr. Paterson not prevented by illness, or some other good reason from attending. And I do not know that the boy Clarke's evidence of such a circumstance will be sufficient to satisfy me!” On Saturday next, then, the case will come on again. If Mr. Paterson finds an excuse, perhaps it will be thought a valid one—perhaps not. In either case there must be another week's delay. And when it does really come on to be heard, most likely the chief witnesses will be out of town for the Christmas holidays. Last Saturday they were all present. Ill as I was, I made it my duty to leave my bed-room and be present to give my evidence, if wanted. I had lodged the complaint against Paterson at the police station on the Tuesday preceding, and another one on the preceding day (Friday). On the latter occasion I ended in a publication (*The Oracle*), printed the night before, and purchased by me of the boy Clarke that same morning, containing the whole substance of the blasphemous placard, of which we have lately heard so much, and a great deal more of a still more blasphemous character. I suggested that Mr. Maule should apply for a summons against the boy himself for selling it, and I undertook to give evidence against him. I left the document with the police. It has been decided, however, that no summons is to be taken out against the boy, nor, indeed, against any body, upon the subject of my complaint. Mr. Chambers says that the government intend to confine themselves to the four summonses already taken out, and that “they do not wish to crush Mr. Paterson with penalties.” May I ask, why not? On his shop window he advertises “atheism for the million,” as he terms his weekly *Oracle of Reason*, in this manner—“Two wretches in gaol, and the third ready.” Why should the government “crush him with penalties?”

It would be a way of at once indulging him and protecting the public.—*Correspondent of the Morning Herald*.

With your comments upon the conduct of Mr. Bruce, touching the manufactory of atheism in Holywell-street, I quite coincide; but I want to show you how I was prevented from punishing the *ruffian*, who has for weeks past been outraging the feelings of every christian. On the 4th of November, in consequence of having seen exhibited in the window of this *miscreant*, Paterson, a libel of a most horrible nature on the deity and our redeemer, couched in language which called forth the strongest expressions of indignation from every respectable person who perused it, I took upon myself the painful task of copying it, and proceeded with it to Bow-street. When presented to the magistrate, I requested him to grant me a summons against Paterson, for having exhibited the libel in his window, contrary to the provisions of the 15th clause in the 47th chapter of the 2nd and 3rd Victoria; and at the same time I handed a copy of the libel to him. The worthy magistrate, after expressing his detestation at the horrible libel, regretted he could not comply with my request for the following reasons—first, that I should have to prove that he placed it there himself, which, as I did not see him do so, I should have had a difficulty in doing; secondly, that it was not exposed or exhibited sufficiently to come within the spirit of the act—to have done which, it should have been placed outside instead of inside, the window; and, thirdly, that Holywell-street, through which 20,000 people pass and re-pass daily, was not considered a thoroughfare within the meaning of the act. Now, sir, is it not a melancholy thing that, upon such trivial grounds as these, the *miscreant* should escape the inadequate punishment provided for him under the provisions of the above act, and that he should be allowed to carry on his infamous calling (*far more dangerous to the morals of the people, in my opinion, than keeping a gambling-house*) with impunity?—I am, sir, your obedient servant, I. L. WILLES, 16, Southampton-street, Fitzroy-square.—*Correspondent of the Standard*.

We understand that communications have been exchanged between the Bishop of London and the Attorney-General on the subject of the impunity which has hitherto been permitted to the publishers of blasphemous tracts and placards, and that measures are about to be adopted by the government for the punishment of the guilty parties. A very few days before the interference of Mr. Knight Bruce, a young gentleman of the name of Willes had applied to Bow-street, and other police-offices, for warrants against the *miscreant* whose windows were broken by Mr. Bruce, without success; those gentlemen, although one of the placards was produced before them, declining to interfere.—*Standard*.

On one side of one of the most crowded thoroughfares in the metropolis, in enormous characters, so that he who runs may read, is advertised the publication and sale of all that is blasphemous and atheistical—of works whose object is (we quote their own words), “to examine, expose, and overthrow that by which priests live—namely, religion; not forms of worship, but worship itself—not the attributes, but the existence of deity.”—*Argus*.

In allusion to the *generous* lenity of the government in favour of this *miscreant*, our correspondent informs us that Mr. Chambers has said “the government *does not wish to crush* Mr. Paterson with penalties;” on which he very pertinently rejoins, “Why not?” and we echo the query. Why not crush a *reptile* who disseminates his poison wholesale, and advertises in his window “atheism for the million?” Is he to be tenderly handled and delicately nursed as if he were a doubtful whig, whose vote is supposed to be worth catching; or are blasphemy and irreligion to be countenanced under the mask of a false prosecution? Is Mr. Chambers instructed by his employers to “hold with the hare and “hunt with the hounds?” If so, all we hope is that he or his employers may meet with the fate of Actæon and be devoured by his own dogs.—*Morning Herald*.

In less than two months parliament will have again assembled, and the metropolitan members will be sadly neglectful of their duty if a bill be not immediately brought in to cleanse this vast city from the foul disease engendered by the tolerance afforded to blasphemous publications—a disease the more dangerous from the risk of infection to which it exposes the young and the uneducated, who have neither knowledge nor understanding to counteract its pernicious tendencies.—*Ibid*.

Several years ago, a gentleman—for the honour of Israel let it be told—he was a Jew—broke a window in the shop of the then notorious Carlile, for the purpose of causing to be removed a disgusting *caricature of the almighty*. For this, Mr. Levy, the gentleman in question, was fined, though, as we remember, in a small sum, and, like Mr. Bruce, required to pay for the broken glass. Unfortunately, the imposition of a fine in the case stamped Mr. Levy’s act with illegality, and *deterred others* from imitating his *excellent example*. Accordingly, the *caricature of the almighty* CONTINUED to be exhibited for many years—as long, indeed, as Carlile kept a shop in Fleet-street.—*Standard*.

We have, in several past numbers of this

paper, directed, in common with some of our contemporaries, the attention of the public authorities to this infamous sink (8, Holywell-street) where blasphemy and indecency contend for the pre-eminence of notoriety; and after repeated intimations had been given of the non-suppression of the place, the owner was brought before the tribunal of justice; yet, with the common fact staring in the face of thousands of spectators who daily pass the *vagabond’s* door (of which fact the magistrate could ascertain the truth at a moment’s notice), the fellow was liberated for want of SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE! This “evidence,” it appears, has at length been supplied by one of those incongruities in which the law alone is permitted to deal and consists of a gentleman’s *violating* the law in order to *establish* it. Mr. Bruce, with a feeling of honourable indignation, as he passes by the shop-window of the delinquent referred to, enters the house in hopes of being enabled to break the bones of the owner—but he having gone out of town for the day Mr. Bruce is content with breaking his windows, and carrying off the evidence of his guilty traffic. The magistrate compliments Mr. Bruce on his feelings: but as, in one point of view, he has been guilty of breaking the law by breaking the windows, he has to pay for so doing, while the very act for which he has to pay is THAT which enables the law to take its course with the main criminal. “Now,” says Mr. Jardine, “the bill is in the hands of the court, there will be no difficulty in bringing it home to the publisher!”—which means neither more nor less than “now one person has broken the law, by common trespass, we are able to bring another to condign punishment, for a series of the deepest crimes!!” If Mr. Jardine required nothing more than the possession of some document necessary to prove the offence of its vendor, he could place his hand on one of the latest acts of parliament, relating to such matters, that would warrant his sending one of his policemen, and seizing the whole contents of the shop in question. But when we find it gravely asserted from the bench of justice that a *wretch* who has been outraging law and decency, for months past, in one of the public streets of the metropolis, cannot be reached but by the agency of one who must break the law to become that agent, *we blush for the infelicity of our statutes, or the ignorance of those who have been deputed to dispense the quality*.—*Age*

We presume the contribution signed, “The Villain of 8, Holywell-street,” to be a forgery, for *great an one* as the vendor of blasphemy must be by all considered, he could barely have the effrontery to defend his practices.—*Ibid*, notice to Correspondents.

We have long been in the habit of regarding our countrymen as a religious people. We have always felt the greatest and truest pride in hearing this distinction conceded to them. We have ever preferred this one epithet to any other which fancy, vanity, or patriotism, might select to point the character of Englishmen, because we have felt that it involves all that can make a people great. No people, born and bred as it were in an atmosphere of religious thought, and inheriting from their birth the old traditional ideas of devotional reverence, can ever sink into servile abasement, or be dissolved in hopeless anarchy. Such a people possess the salient and vigorous elements of health, power, and perpetuity. We are by no means unaware that as many inconsistencies may be seen in a community as in an individual; and that, even in a country generally esteemed moral, decent, and religious, particular instances of gross irreligion, or scandalous immorality, will occasionally obtrude themselves upon our notice. But this is quite in accordance with the laws of all human society, the general operation of which is strongly illustrated even by their exceptional infringements: these it is the especial duty of the national executive to mitigate and subdue, and thus to prevent the infringement of a law superseding the law itself.—*The Times*.

Every one must concur in your remarks on the proceedings connected with the Holywell-street nuisance. Will you allow me, however, to add a few more? You designate Mr. Bruce's conduct as an "outrage." It certainly is so; and in consideration of his motives he may be excused. This is the utmost that can be said. But that a magistrate on the bench should think fit to laud his conduct to the skies, and to tell him that the public are indebted to him for what he has done, *seems to me totally inexcusable*. The consequence has been, as might have been anticipated, that other individuals, without Mr. Bruce's excuse of suddenly provoked indignation, but with deliberate consideration and forethought, proceed to the commission of like outrages, and receive in like manner their modicum of magisterial commendation. Pray inform these good people, that they would better show their public spirit by prosecuting the offender in the manner the law has directed, and which is open to any person so minded. The misfortune is, that where the laws are set in motion by the crown-officers in so shameful, dilatory, and lax a manner as they have been in this instance, these unseemly ebullitions of indignation cannot be repressed as they should be, or this anomaly would exist, that the infamous outragers of the fundamental laws, as well of morality as of

their country, would go untouched, while the well-meaning but *foolish enthusiast*, taking the law into his own hands, would be punished. Public feeling would not suffer this—but let the government endeavour to get over its scruples as to its treating such *abandoned wretches* as Paterson with "harshness," and it is to be hoped that magistrates will then see the necessity of inflicting something *more severe than their praise* upon those who *insult their country* by acting as though it were unable to vindicate its own laws.—*Correspondent of the Times*.

In reply to the question of your correspondent, "Christian," I beg to call the attention of the police to their last act of parliament, 2 and 3 Victoria, c. 47, s. 54:—"Be it enacted, that every person shall be liable to a penalty, not more than 40s., who within the limits of the metropolitan police district shall, in any thoroughfare or public place, commit any of the following offences: that is to say—12. Every person who shall sell or distribute, or offer for sale or distribution, or *exhibit to public view*, any profane, indecent, or obscene book, paper, print," &c. It cannot, I think, be contended, that a man who places an infamous titlepage or frontispiece in the window of a shop in Holywell-street, does not "exhibit to public view in a thoroughfare or public place any profane or indecent book, paper, or print:" in other words, he is within the letter as well as the spirit of this act. In other respects, as, for instance, against wandering minstrels, beggars, chimneysweepers, and so forth, this act has been vigorously carried into execution: let the offenders against common decency (and therefore against the common law) try its weight, and I will engage that a fine of 40s. *toties quoties*, will soon put down this disgusting nuisance. In conclusion, I would suggest to the parish authorities, that everywhere, except in London, the common law remedies of daily practice are quite sufficient to repress the sale within the shops of such publications as these. I trust the day has gone by, when the "liberty of the press" can be effectually urged in palliation of these enormities, and remain, with confidence in the home administration, who ought to look to this, your obedient servant, A BAR-
RISTER.—*Ibid*.

Let me implore you not relax in your most *praiseworthy* endeavours to direct public attention to, and, as a natural consequence, indignation against, the blasphemy shop in Holywell-street. Rely on it that your exertions will be crowned with success. It is true that the *miscreant* still continues to expose his horrible blasphemy in his window, for there it was, in various forms, this very afternoon to the disgrace, as I consider,

of our laws, and of those who should execute them. If it was not a well-known fact, would it be credited, either in this country or on the continent, that London possesses commissioners of police, a bishop of the diocese, an attorney-general, and a secretary of state for the home department? If some of those authorities are afraid of acting on their own responsibility, from any supposed ambiguity in the law, and dread being saddled with expenses, surely the secretary of state for the home department should long since, the very moment he heard of such an abominable outrage against public morals, have taken upon himself to issue positive orders to the commissioners of police to effectually suppress the nuisance. This could have been done by directing the constables to enter the shop and to seize all the blasphemous placards, and to do this as often as it should be attempted to exhibit them. It is absurd to suppose that the *infamous tenant* of the shop would attempt to take any proceedings against the constables or against the commissioners; and if he could or did *what magistrate, what judge, or what jury would listen to him?* Your remarks, have already attracted so much attention, that a great many influential persons have determined to bring the matter to an issue. A petition to the secretary of state for the home department will, no doubt, be drawn up, and numerously signed, when it will be presented. Let me hope, however, that Sir James Graham will not wait to be thus reminded of what the public consider to be his duty, but that forthwith he will effectually suppress this crying evil. I consider that a *summary mode* of dealing with such a case is infinitely preferable to an indictment, which is both tedious and expensive in the present state of the law. A LONDON MERCHANT.—*Post.*

THE WINDOW-SMASHING CASE.—Allured by the powerful articles in the *John Bull*, *Spectator*, *Atlas*, and a host of their attendant small fry, on the fearful decline of the British drama, wherein it clearly appears that the stage of the present day possesses neither actors nor authors, I have travelled, at a considerable expense in shoe-leather, from the beautiful village of Hazel-grove (once vulgarly called Bullock's Smithy) to prove to the London public (for I am a votary of Thespis) that the above mentioned clever periodicals are not quite correct in their premises. I am a favourite of some standing (a trifle above six feet in my stockings,—excuse the joke) in our village, as I love to call the Smithy—I mean the “grove;” in fact, many excellent judges prefer my method of giving “Sl-laves, I’ll grr-ind your bones to make my a brr-ead-a” far better than Macready, which, I confess, is rather strong, for “the great tragedian” is

well known to be the greatest savage on the stage. Well, “to return to the twenty pounds.” Did you ever see Elliston in *Rover*—or John Kemble in *King John*? I have. Oh! *they were actors*, Master Brook. I have made repeated applications to both the patent houses for an opportunity of displaying my extraordinary talent. “No opening.” “You may be very clever; but we cannot run a risk.” “*Actors are not wanted now,*” &c.

Meditating on my hard lot, over my pint of coffee—(it’s astonishing, by the by, how they can contrive to give that quantity of fluid and a muffin for twopence-halfpenny)—when I accidentally took up your inestimable journal—permit me, *en passant*, to compliment you on the vast talent displayed in every line, particularly in the clothing and blacking advertisements. I there read the report of the Holywell-street window-smashing case. On a sudden a new light broke upon me; I saw at once a short road to fame and fortune. If a young gentleman can gain so much approbation by breaking one pane of glass, what is to be gained by breaking a whole window? A government pension, and a distinguished place in the history of England. Fired with bright visions, I have resolved to bring all my energies to a focus, and with a beautiful little ash plant—cut with my own hands and knife (*souvenir d’un jour heureux*) from a *plantation* (excuse the pun) in the smithy—no, the “grove”—smash not only every pane in the *shop* window, but attempt a *shiver* on the first floor, by an artistical shyness of my beloved ash, which, by dint of hard practice, I can back at 5 to 4 to star at least a dozen squares. This will at once give me the opportunity I have so long been fasting and praying for; my name will become known, and my welfare the wish of every virtuous heart. A player, the champion of morality! wonderful! I shall become the fashion as an “*extraordinary novelty*,” and my fortune is made, if you, Mr Editor, with your boundless philanthropy, will make known to your illimitable world of readers, that I take a benefit at Drury-lane Theatre (on the next night it is closed for the “preparation for a new piece,”) when I shall endeavour to convince the critics of the *Bull*, *Spectator*, &c., by my performance of the principal character in my own tragedy of *The Plebeian’s Son*, that the dramatic art is not extinct; and my patrons may be assured I will make it a duty to continue my virtuous indignation against the Holywell-street people, as long as a profane window remains to be smashed. VITREUS MILLER.—*Sunday Times.*

Printed and Published by THOMAS PATERSON, No. 46, Wych-street, Strand, London, to whom all Communications should be addressed.

Saturday, January 14, 1843.

ORACLE OF REASON:

Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE"

EDITED BY THOMAS PATERSON.

No. 58.] Originally Edited by CHARLES SOUTHWELL, sentenced, on January 15, 1842,
to Twelve Months' Imprisonment in Bristol Gaol, and to pay a fine of £100, [PRICE 1D.
for Blasphemy, contained in No. 4.
Second Editor, G. J. HOLYOAKE, sentenced, on August 15, 1842, to Six Months'
Imprisonment in Gloucester Gaol, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.

DISSENTERS.

THE Reformation was a gunpowder plot, that *did* blow up the parliament—of religion. The fragments which fell at the explosion were called *dissenters*. All the ruins of the old building are not yet come down. Episcopalianism, presbyterianism, calvinism, were heavy lumps, which soon descended. Methodism followed, in a fell swoop. These fragments blazed for a time, as fragments of burning ruins sometimes will. At present they only smoke—but as smoking is not eternal, it is expected that they will, some day, cease to do that. Some of the pieces came down *cold*—unitarianism to wit. Other pieces are still descending, such are the Mormons, holy-rollers, and other choice specimens of the "heirs of god, and joint-heirs of Jesus Christ."

Forsaking simile, and speaking very soberly, it cannot be denied that all the religions of modern days, however remote in their degrees of descent from the famous old harlot of Rome—they all spring from one root—assumed knowledge of a deity—and they all resemble her mightily in the means they adopt to preserve their several faiths. If those conglomerations of godliness, comprised under the term dissenters, do not imprison such as disagree with them, they help the church that does, and, secretly or openly, with hearty good will, throw their widow's mite into the treasury of persecution for opinion's sake. They all feel that the attorney-general is the "sacred anchor" that keeps the old ship of piety steady, or steadyish, in the storm of free inquiry, whose winds "visit her too roughly." The dungeon is the true lord of hosts, on whom they all rely. These remarks find a ready confirmation in recent facts. In the Gloucester prosecutions for god, or as the cant goes, for blasphemy, the principal witness against Adams and Holyoake, was the independent preacher named Bartram. Now, in some acts of parliament of that "bright accidental star," Queen Elizabeth, of pious memory, and, of that "by-the-grace-of-god-defender-of-the-faith," king James, the class of religionists to

which Bartram belongs, are styled "*damnable heretics*." Here, then, was a man, who in the gentle and *decent* vocabulary of the church of England, was himself a "*damnable heretic*" dissenter, stepping into the witness box, to prosecute parties who happened to dissent from him. Why the same man would have had his ears cut off, and his tongue bored, for his own heresy, by the very party who then employed him, had he come into the world a few years earlier. Yet this poor driveller laid down his bible, forsook his prayers, forgot his trust in god, abandoned all argument; and threw himself, a base and crawling panderer, into the arms of men who held him in derision and contempt, in order to have bolstered up the rotten cause he could not support by reason. What a wretched and ignominious fate it must be to be a christian.

Once the name of dissenter was a proud and honourable title—borne by brave men, who, despite of persecution, *would* think and worship as they thought proper—spurning any and every man's dictation. And as integrity and independence are always respectable—though employed upon a bad cause—dissenters were then respectable for their unbending resolutions of freedom. But where has fled the spirit of their glorious struggles? when their sons are become the willing tools of a persecuting church. We read of the brave old covenanters, who sought the wild glen, and barren rock, rather than compel or give to god, other than the worship of free men. But their ignoble descendants are found in courts of law, extorting by force the homage reason refuses. Their ancestors left their native land, and laid their bones on a foreign shore, sooner than resign their independence. Degenerate modern dissenters neither have independence themselves, nor will they allow it to others. Their infamy disturbs the brave dead, whom they disgrace by calling them sires. Elliott says:—

They speak! the pilgrim fathers
Speak to us from their graves,
For earth hath muttered to their bones—
Their sons are soulless slaves.

HINTS ON POLITICS.

II.

It needs no great stretch of sagacity to understand that a people so thoroughly corrupted, nay, brutalised, as an overwhelming majority of British people are, never can, in their present state of mind, work out any extensively useful reform. The wise Alfred said he wished his subjects to be "free as their own thoughts," and he is a poor politician who needs be told that freedom of thought must precede freedom of action. "For a people to be free, 'tis sufficient that they will it," said Lafayette—but *willing* to be free is not all, as the will for freedom without the knowledge how to achieve it, is rather more dangerous than useful. For more than sixty years has the movement party of the country been struggling for a radical reform of the commons' house of parliament—and what has been gained? The question is soon answered. Nothing, absolutely nothing! Sixty years ago *the people* had just as much to do with the election of parliament members as at this hour—and it may fairly be questioned whether the great bulk of our population are now so well fed, clothed, and housed as in 1780. There has been no lack of agitation—no lack of courage, energy, and means, to accomplish great ends—no lack of anything, in short, save consistent, intelligible, political principle, without which popular agitation is a social nuisance, and the cry therefrom mere empty sound. The people collectively are the slaves of a debasing superstition, that bids defiance to everything like reason and common sense. A people of priest-ridden fanatics, such as the English people have hitherto been, cannot comprehend *principles* of any kind. It is the very nature of falsehood to debase reason, and no kind of falsehood is so pernicious as its quintessence—called by the vulgar, religious truth. What hope can be entertained for the immediate regeneration of a people who receive as the written word of a deity the monstrous doctrine that *there is no power but of god—the powers that be are ordained of god*—that the governments of a Castlereagh and Sidmouth *were of god*—and that *whosoever resisted their power, resisted the ordinance of god, and shall receive to themselves damnation*? Will any apologist of popular errors, or flatterer of popular prejudice, have the hardihood to contend that a christian who is not ashamed to take Saint Peter's advice, and "joyfully submit to every ordinance of man *for the lord's sake*," is in a state of mind to aid in establishing good government? Good government, forsooth, why such ill-tempered lumps of earth and phlegm are far better suited

than establish, or suffer to be established, a really good government.

Superstition infects the very life-blood of political action. There is hardly a man who now takes the lead in popular agitation, whose intellect is not polluted by it. Such men *may* be wiser than they appear, and only pander to popular superstitions, from motives of expediency. If so, they are hypocrites, and morally unfit to achieve anything really worth achieving. Richard Carlile has well said, "a tyrannical and corrupt government is indispensable to a superstitious people. A free and liberty-loving government must have its foundation in a free-minded and liberty-loving people." The question then is, have we in this country material for such a foundation—have we a free-minded and liberty-loving people?—and, if we have not, can such material be created, and how? The writer is of opinion that there is nothing sound, nothing durable in the principle-less political agitations which now distract and confuse, rather than improve or well direct, the popular mind. See how chartism, which has in it the elements of good, if its apostles cared or knew how to extract it—see, I say, how chartism has been degraded and stultified by the miserable trickeries of some of its advocates. One of chartism's most eloquent expounders has repeatedly said at public meetings, that 'twas "the will of god the charter should become the law of the land." Another eloquent "prater" has most sagaciously discovered that "Jesus Christ was the first Chartist." While a third, no less shrewd or knavish than the other two, is quite sure that "Moses and the prophets were favourable to Chartist principles." Surely we need no ghost to admonish us, that even a good cause *thus* advocated never can progress. Such low-minded chicanery has, to my certain knowledge, done immense mischief, not only to chartism, but to the cause of reform generally. The abstract merits of chartism are here left out of view—the dishonest, canting advocacy, by men who do know better, is what I deprecate. Feargus O'Connor, much to his credit, attempted to stem the torrent of bibleism which, for the last two years, has poured in upon him from all quarters. He has repeatedly declared he *never knew any good come of bible chartism*—and he might have promised, with perfect safety, that no good can come of bible chartism or bible anything. I should as soon expect to see an elephant mount into the air like an eagle, as a bible-bewildered blockhead carry any but a fool's charter. But though O'Connor has occasionally evinced a disrelish for bible chartism and a new barebones parliament, he has foolishly, if not designedly pampered the superstitious feelings of his followers. In the "National Petition," which he is understood to have

drawn up, there is much that is truly admirable—much that is useless—and *quantum suff.*, touching Christ and his religion, thoroughly contemptible.

What the *daft* lingo poured forth by a set of idle knaves, fools, and enthusiasts eighteen hundred years ago has to do with the question of chartism or political liberty, it puzzles me to determine. We are told in the petition referred to, that “it is unjust, and not in accordance with the christian religion, to enforce compulsory support of religious creeds, and expensive church establishments, with which the people do not agree.” Now, in the first place, no two christian sects agree as to what *is* or what is *not* in accordance with the christian religion. If any parties could infallibly decide what is or what is not in accordance with the christian religion, there might be some sense in such language. If we know a law to be unjust, let us by all means petition against it, *because it is unjust*, and not because it is in accordance or discordance with the christian religion. In another part of this complex petition I find the following, “that your petitioners direct the attention of your honourable house to the enormous revenue annually swallowed up by bishops and the clergy, and entreat you to contrast their deeds with the conduct of the founder of the christian religion, who denounced worshippers of Mammon, and taught charity, meekness, and brotherly love.” Now this is altogether most mischievously stupid, and is false to boot—for the character drawn of the fabled mythic Jesus, is really, when well searched into, a very despicable one. As represented by the evangelists, he was a petulant, narrow-minded, vindictive enthusiast, who was exceedingly meek, charitable, and loving, when not opposed in his crotchety humours. Like a certain *liberal* Irishman, who was the best fellow in the world, only let him have all his own way. As to denouncing the worship of Mammon, it is what all *poor* reformers do, but it is seldom that, when the scale of authority turns in their favour, they refuse to offer up prayers at the same shrine. It is no uncommon occurrence for experimentarians upon human credulity to *begin* by lauding poverty, denouncing riches, and exhibiting double-distilled charity, meekness, &c. Sect founders are usually good actors, and supposing Jesus of Nazareth to have been anything more than an imaginary personage, we may conclude his part was played in an effective and popular style. I will return to this mixey-maxey in my next, for political cant has grown to an intolerable height, and must be exposed.

Doubt is the key of knowledge; those who do not doubt will never examine; and those who do not examine will never *know*, but remain in perpetual ignorance.

THE FREE INQUIRER'S WHY AND BECAUSE.

WRITTEN BY CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

XI.

WHY is man said to be responsible to the laws of his nature?

Because men have assumed the existence of a revengeful personal deity, to whom their busy imaginations have given all kinds of attributes—who is by some supposed to promulge laws, and brutally punish those who knowingly or unknowingly violate them, just as earthly tyrants do their enthusiasts—forgetting, or, perhaps, never knowing, that although our senses inform us that the universe exists, our senses do not inform us that there is a being beyond the universe, capable of creating it—still less that such a being would be guilty of the savage cruelty, only to be equalled by its folly, of punishing human beings for what he must have known (having prescience or fore-knowledge) they were destined to commit. To say that man is held responsible by man, is substantially correct, as before shown, seeing that some men inflict pain upon their fellow-creatures in the spirit of vengeance—which latter, having the effrontery to think that they are, forsooth, made after the image of deity, have (as once observed by a witty philosopher) returned the compliment, and alarmed the gaping idiots who listen to them, by describing the god of nature as a jealous, capricious, restless, cruel being, full of wrath and hatred—in fact, an image of themselves. What are so loosely called laws of nature, are mere facts or phenomena displayed by matter. When water is poured upon salt, the latter is dissolved, and, as chemists say, held in solution—here an effect is produced, of which the cause is said to be the water which acts upon the salt, and changes its appearance and properties. When we observe this, we observe a fact, not a law, as before shown. A man thrusts his hand into the fire, and is dreadfully burnt—but we should be rather silly to say that the fire held him responsible, because of the pain he suffered—it would scarcely be more ridiculous to say that men hold the fire responsible. All laws are human, and cannot exist without law-makers, as there can be no government without governors—and all responsibility includes the idea, first of persons who judge, punish, and reward—and secondly of those judged, punished, and rewarded—and lastly, that the persons so judged, punished, or rewarded, deserve their fate.

Why did the ancients call man a microcosm, or a little world within himself?

Because man is thought to be the most complex or compounded being in nature—made up of atoms, or those unchangeable

elements into which all substances are ultimately divisible. These elements are called simple natures—but it is generally admitted that, strictly speaking, there are no such things as simple natures, all being more or less compounded, as we know that the vegetable partakes more or less of the mineral character, the animal of the vegetable, while in man is to be found something of everything.

Why are human beings said to be organised?

Because, as before noted, all bodies are either organic or inorganic—and as the particles which compose our globe are continually in motion, new states or combinations of matter are produced, so that what to-day is an organised living substance, will, perhaps, to-morrow be inorganic, or dead—and *vice versa*, that which is now inorganic, will, at some future period, be living—so that, in imagination, we may trace the noble dust of Alexander, and find it stopping a bung-hole. Shelley's few lines in "Queen Mab," are in allusion to this fact.

There's not one atom of yon earth
But once was living man;
Nor the minutest drop of rain,
That hangeth in its thinnest cloud,
But flowed in human veins:
And from the burning plains
Where Lybian monsters yell,
From the most gloomy glens
Of Greenland's sunless clime,
To where the golden fields
Of fertile England spread
Their harvest to the day,
Thou can'st not find one spot
Whereon no city stood.

Vegetables are said to be organised, because they bear sexual marks, and are the production of a male and female, as all plants and vegetables not merely grow and feed, but perpetuate their species. Animals are organised, and in addition to the above mentioned properties or powers, which they have in common with plants and vegetables, have a capacity to receive sensations, and the power of voluntary motion, which no other substances or organised existences are supposed to possess, although even this has been disputed by some, who contend that plants—the sensitive plants—have a capacity, as the name implies, to receive sensations more or less powerful. We may add, that the distinction made by natural philosophers, between the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms, is fanciful and arbitrary, as no such distinction really exists—as nature is one, all being in all, and everything in everything—but these distinctions are made with a view to help us to an understanding of natural phenomena, and provided that object be achieved, it matters little how, so that neither time nor energy be wasted. Human beings, the inferior animals, birds,

fishes, trees, plants, &c., are organic, whereas minerals, crystals, stones, &c., are inorganic, and may be broken into a thousand pieces, yet each part will remain a perfect mineral, crystal, or stone. All substances, whether organic or inorganic, are resolvable into vapour or gas, by the application of heat. It is well known that the solid granite is of igneous or fiery origin, and was once in a fluid state (indeed all fluids are nothing more than solids set in motion by heat) and may, for ought we know, again become so—whilst the diamond, one of the hardest substances in nature, has been made to blaze like paper, and dissipate its particles in vapour or gas.

Why has life been called a property of organisation?

Because all dead matter is inorganic, whilst all organic bodies, or, as they are called, organisations, include the idea of life. The difference between the life of a caterpillar or beetle is one of degree only, and not of essence, which degree of life is entirely dependant upon the organs and their susceptibilities. The horse and the eagle both live, but the sum and strength of the sensations experienced by each are widely different. Human beings are advantageously distinguished from brutes, by the peculiarity of their structure or organisation. The opinion once held, that men were but improved or civilised apes, will not bear the light which comparative anatomy has cast upon it, by which it is demonstrated that the structure of the ape is essentially different, and we need hardly add inferior, to that of man—the erect position of the latter, his noble and imposing appearance, his enormous cranium or skull, together with the peculiar structure of the hand, aptly termed the instrument of instruments, must convince the most sceptical, that if man is not yet "noble in reason," or in action like an angel, he may speedily become so, if the form and doings of angels are to be considered as types or symbols of nobility and goodness.

A THEOLOGICAL DICTIONARY

FOR THE RELIGIOUS WORLD.

Anti-Atheism—A refuge for those who cannot or dare not reason on the existence of god for themselves.

Bible—A book to be kept out of the way of children, lest they should be induced to imitate the follies and vices recorded therein, as being committed by the command of a god.

Christianity—A term used to justify every outrage upon human liberty.

Devil—An imaginary being, created by priests, to frighten the careless and timid into submission to their commands.

Election (Calvinistic)—A capital plan to

PHYSICAL MYTHOLOGY.

BY LORD BACON.

I.

THE FABLE OF CÆLUM,

Explained of the creation, or origin of all things.

THE poets relate, that Cælum was the most ancient of all the gods—that his parts of generation were cut off by his son Saturn—that Saturn had a numerous offspring—but devoured all his sons, as soon as they were born—that Jupiter, at length, escaped the common fate—and, when grown up, drove his father Saturn into Tartarus—usurped the kingdom—cut off his father's genitals, with the same knife wherewith Saturn had dismembered Cælum, and throwing them into the sea, thence sprung Venus.

Before Jupiter was well established in his empire, two memorable wars were made upon him—the first by the Titans, in subduing of whom, Sol, the only one of the Titans who favoured Jupiter, performed him singular service. The second by the giants—who being destroyed and subdued by the thunder and arms of Jupiter, he now reigned secure.

EXPLANATION.

This fable appears to be an enigmatical account of the origin of all things—not greatly differing from the philosophy afterwards embraced by Democritus, who expressly asserts the eternity of matter—but denies the eternity of the world.

The meaning of the fable seems to be this—Cælum denotes the concave space, or vaulted roof that incloses all matter—and Saturn the matter itself, which cuts off all power of generation from his father—as one and the same quantity of matter remains invariable in nature, without addition or diminution. [The original quantity of matter remaining invariably the same, explains that circumstance in the fable, of the same knife being used for the dismembering of Saturn, as had before been used for the dismembering of Cælum.] But the agitations and struggling motions of matter, first produced certain imperfect and ill joined compositions of things, as it were so many first rudiments, or essays of worlds—till, in process of time, there arose a fabric capable of preserving its form and structure. Whence the first age was shadowed out by the reign of Saturn—who, on account of the frequent dissolutions, and short durations of things, was said to devour his children. And the second age was denoted by the reign of Jupiter—who thrust or drove those frequent and transitory changes into Tartarus—a place expressive of disorder. This place seems to be the middle space, between the lower heaven and the internal parts of the earth—wherein disorder, imperfection,

keep the ignorant faithful true to the christian fold, by making them believe that they at least are on the right side, whatever may be the fate of others, and to show that "god is no respecter of persons."

Fall of Man—A bungling story, pretending to account for the origin of evil, in which reckless conjecture supplies the place of facts.

God—A being whose existence is proved by casting men into prison for blasphemy.

Hell—An imaginary place of endless torture, provided by priests for the wisest and best of the human race, for their unbelief.

Illness—An especial proof that we are the favoured of god—"whom the lord loveth he chasteneth."

Jail—An asylum provided by christian benevolence for blasphemers, it being the strongest argument for christianity.

Kindness (christian)—A thing supposed, but not proved, to exist.

Lord Jesus—A third part of the christian's god, the idea being stolen from the Pagans—christians being now ashamed of the theft.

Malice—One of the most prominent legitimate fruits of the christian tree.

Nativity (holy)—A very foolish story of a woman's frailty, believed in by some millions of grown children called christians.

Omnipotence—One of the attributes of the christian's deity, proved by scripture stating that the devil is the god of this world.

Priesthood—A body of men employed to deceive the human race, their principal characteristics being lying, deceit, malice, vice, ignorance, and folly.

Questions (theological)—Things admirably adapted to produce mental imbecility, and disregard of moral principle.

Resurrection—One of the principal absurdities of christian theology, which has cost an immense amount of blood and treasure.

Soul (salvation)—A doctrine producing slavery and misery of body and mind, depriving us of the benefits of this world, by promising us a "far better" we can't tell when or where.

Trials (christian)—Miseries sent by the creator to promote the creature's happiness.

Understanding—A quality of the human mind, which theologians seek to destroy.

Vice—An evil which exists in christian countries more especially, and which christianity neither prevents nor destroys, though professing to accomplish both when received.

Water (baptismal)—A liquid that washes away our sins, and makes us "fit for glory"—a very scarce commodity in hell. (See the story of "Dives and Lazarus.")

Xcommunication (ecclesiastical)—Something to laugh at.

Yoke (christian)—A burden which all find grievous to be borne.

Zion (hill of)—Climax of christian absurdity.

J.C.F.

mutation, mortality, destruction, and corruption are principally found.

Venus was not born during the former generation of things, under the reign of Saturn—for whilst discord and jar had the upper hand of concord and uniformity in the matter of the universe, a change of the entire structure was necessary. And in this manner things were generated and destroyed, before Saturn was dismembered. But when this manner of generation ceased—[when Jupiter possessed the throne, or after a durable world was formed. Let the figurative or personifying manner of expression, usual among the poets, be all along considered]—there immediately followed another, brought about by Venus, or a perfect and established harmony of things; whereby changes were wrought in the parts, whilst the universal fabric remained entire and undisturbed. Saturn, however, is said to be thrust out and dethroned, not killed, and become extinct—because agreeably to the opinion of Democritus, the world might relapse into its old confusion and disorder—which Lucretius hoped would not happen in his time.

But now, when the world was compact, and held together by its own bulk and energy—yet there was no rest from the beginning. For first, there followed considerable motions and disturbances in the celestial regions—though so regulated and moderated by the power of the sun, prevailing over the heavenly bodies, as to continue the world in its state. Afterwards there followed the like in the lower parts, by inundations, storms, winds, general earthquakes, &c., which, however, being subdued and kept under, there ensued a more peaceable and lasting harmony, and consent of things.

It may be said of this fable, that it includes philosophy—and again, that philosophy includes the fable. For we know, by faith, that all these things are but the oracle of sense, long since ceased and decayed—but the matter and fabric of the world being *justly* (?) attributed to a creator.

BRUCE-LAW AND THE HOLYWELL STREET SHOP.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

(Continued.)

Mr. Paterson, of Holywell-street, is engaged by the same spirited proprietors who lately gave an appearance to Miss Alice Lowe, and will shortly make his *début* in a piece written for his peculiar talents. Paterson's "boy" will also have a part.—*Punch*.

Of late years the legislature has displayed *infinite tenderness* towards the feelings of

the papist, and other dissenters from the church of England. All processions, flags, emblems, and rejoicings on the anniversaries of great historical events or achievements by British protestants are forbidden; and the executive government takes anxious care to fulfil in these respects the intentions of the legislature. May we not then ask, why it is that government, so tender with respect to the feelings and even the prejudices of particular bodies of sectarians, has no regard for the christian public? The common law of England, no less than the late police act, gives ample power to suppress the abomination of blasphemous and indecent publications, whatever form they may assume—book, placard, or print. Why, then, are such things permitted to be held forth for the gratification of a prurient appetite in the vile and godless, and to the offence and indignation of all moral and decent persons? Is this not a strange, if not a culpable, remissness, not less upon the part of those in authority over us than of their subordinate agents? We have in these latter days many fine new-fangled things—music for the million, literature for the million—we always had politics for the million; but here was *blasphemy* and *bawdry* for the million on a grand scale. We cordially agree with the magistrate in the view he took of the case. The public have a good right to be grateful to Mr. Bruce for the course he took, which was *manly* and *straight-forward* from first to last.—*John Bull*.

Having occasion to cross Blackfriars-bridge yesterday, I observed, in passing a place inscribed the "South London Hall of Science," a large placard exhibiting, at the head of several queries of a similar nature, "The bible no revelation," with an announcement that the subjects so propounded would be discussed on a day named by a person calling herself Mrs. Martin. Who this *female blasphemer* may be, is a matter of no moment; but it is lamentable that English women, if such they are, can be found capable of so disgracing their sex and their country—and if it is necessary to impose a legal restraint upon the sale of arsenic and other deleterious drugs, it is surely the duty of the magistrates in whose district this nuisance is situated, to endeavour to prevent the diffusion of a moral poison, which, in proportion to its prevalence, must be productive of infinitely greater misery than any which can "only kill the body" of those that swallow it.—*Standard*.

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PLUTARCH ON MIRACLES.—Plutarch relates, that in the days of Coriolanus the women of Rome set up the image of a certain goddess, which was no sooner erected than it uttered these words, “O women! most acceptable to the gods is this your pious gift.” Upon this Plutarch remarks. “They fabulously report that this voice was repeated twice, thus offering to our faith things that appear impossible. Indeed, we will not deny that images may have sweated, may have been covered with tears, and emitted drops like blood. For wood and stone often contract a scurf and mouldiness, that produce a moisture; and they not only exhibit many different colours themselves, but receive variety of tinctures from the ambient air. It is also very possible that a sound, like that of a sigh or a groan, may proceed from a statue, by the rupture or violent separation of the interior parts: but that an articulate voice and expression, so clear, so full and perfect should fall from a thing inanimate, is out of all the bounds of possibility. For neither the soul of man, nor even god himself, can utter vocal sounds, and pronounce words without an organised body and parts fitted for utterance. Wherever, then, history asserts such things, and bears us down with the testimony of many credible witnesses, we must conclude that some impression, not unlike that of sense, influenced the imagination, and produced the belief of a real sensation; as in sleep we seem to hear what we hear not, and to see what we do not see.”

TITHES.—A certain woman found, by the wayside, a lamb perishing with cold and hunger. She had pity upon the lamb, and took it into her house, and nursed it, and brought it again unto life. And it came to pass, that the lamb grew up, and was a goodly ewe, and had a large fleece. And the poor woman sheared the ewe. When lo! the priest came unto the woman, and said, “The first fruits of everything belong unto

the lord, and I must have the wool." The woman said, "It is hard." The priest said, "It is written"—and so he took the wool. And it came to pass, that soon after the ewe yeaned, and brought forth a lamb. When lo! the priest came again unto the woman, and said, "The firstling of every flock belongeth unto the lord—I must have the lamb!" The woman said, "It is hard." The priest said, "It is written"—and he took the lamb. And it came to pass, that when the woman found that she could make no profit from the ewe, she killed and dressed it. When lo! the priest came again unto her, and took a leg, a loin, and a shoulder, for a burnt offering! And it came to pass, that the woman was exceeding wroth, because of the robbery; and she said unto the chief priest, "Curse on the ewe, O that I had never meddled therewith." And the chief priest straightwaysaid unto her, "Whatsoever is cursed belongeth unto the lord"—so he took the remainder of the mutton, which he and the Levites ate for their supper.

CHRISTIAN CURSE.—By command of the father, son, and holy ghost, of the blessed Mary, mother of our lord Jesus Christ, of St. Michael, John the Baptist, and of Peter and Paul, princes of the apostles, of St. Stephen and all the martyrs, of St. Sylvester and all the confessors, of St. Aldegund and all the holy virgins, and of all the saints whatsoever, both in heaven and earth: *we curse* and cut off from the holy mother the church, him, her, or them, that have [here follows the offence] or have known thereof, or have been advising, abetting, or assisting therein. Let them be accursed in their houses, granaries, beds, fields, lands, ways, country seats, towns, and villages. Let them be accursed in the woods, rivers, and churches; accursed in pleadings, trials, contentions, and quarrels; accursed in praying, speaking, and in silence; in eating, drinking, and sleeping; in waking, feeling, walking, standing, running, resting, and riding; accursed in hearing, seeing, and tasting; accursed in all their works. Let this curse smite their heads, eyes, and their whole bodies, from the crown of their head to the sole of their feet. I conjure you, Satan, and all thy black guard, by the father, son, and holy ghost, that ye do not rest day or night, till ye have brought them both to temporal and eternal shame, whether it be by causing them to be drowned, or hanged, or devoured by wild beasts, or torn in pieces by vultures or eagles, or burnt by fire, or murdered by their enemies: make them odious to all creatures living. Let their children be orphans, and their wives widows. Let no man relieve them from this time forward, nor have any compassion for their fatherless children; and just as *Lucifer* was

driven out of heaven, and Adam banished from Paradise, let them also be driven and banished out of this world, being despoiled of all their goods and possessions, and let them be buried with the burial of an ass. Let them partake of the punishment of Cora, Dathan and Abiram, of Pontius Pilate, and of all that say to the lord their god, depart from us, we will have no knowledge of thy ways (at these words the person who pronounced the curse extinguished two burning tapers, which he held in his hands, with the following dreadful expressions)—I adjure thee, Satan, and all thy companions, that just as these candles are extinguished in my hands, thou dost likewise extinguish and take from them the light of their eyes, unless they repent and make entire amends.

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CONCERT AND BALL

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PART I. of the second volume of the ORACLE is now ready, stitched in a wrapper. Five Numbers, price Fivepence.

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Saturday, January 21, 1843.

THE
ORACLE OF REASON:
Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

“FAITH’S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE”

EDITED BY THOMAS PATERSON.

Originally Edited by CHARLES SOUTHWELL, sentenced, on January 15, 1842,
to Twelve Months’ Imprisonment in Bristol Gaol, and to pay a fine of £100,

[PRICE 1D.

No. 59.]

for Blasphemy, contained in No. 4.
Second Editor, G. J. HOLYOAKE, sentenced, on August 15, 1842, to Six Months’
Imprisonment in Gloucester Gaol, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.

POLITICS OF THE APOSTLES.

IT is well known that some of the most noisy declaimers about popular rights, and *soi-disant* radical reformers, are great sticklers for a christian faith. I will therefore make free to hold up, for the admiration or execration, as it may be, of my readers, the politics of the apostles, or rather, of *two* apostles, Paul and Peter—as nothing important has been set down for the other apostolics of a political character. Paul was not only chief of sinners, but, also, chief mouth-piece for the, *vulgarly* believed, first christians. Peter, of cock-crowing memory, was (supposing the pack of fables truths) a fickle, lying coward—but as christians say he is not only a saint *in*, but gaoler *of*, heaven, why his authority, as a politician, will doubtless have great weight with them. Let us see, then, what kind of radicalism these two great preachers of pure christianity are credited with by gospel manufacturers. I will begin with Paul, because, for good or for evil, for enlightening or humbugging, he was worth a thousand Peters. In the epistle to the Romans, chap. xiii. verses from 1 to 6, “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of god; the powers that be, are ordained of god. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of god; and they that resist shall receive unto themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou, then, not be afraid of the power, do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of god, to thee for good. But if

thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of god, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are god’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.” Now this *may* be democratic; it may have a tendency to inspire those who believe it divine, with liberal and generous political sentiments—but really I must say, there is nothing upon the face of it, that a Nero or a Caligula would not have greatly admired. What could flatter their vanity and soothe their ferocity more, than to be thought, as Saint Paul exhorts christians to think *all* such tyrants, namely, *ministers of god*? Nothing whatever could more gratify them, save being themselves deemed gods. Caligula, in the hey-day of his mad power, made his horse consul—but then, according to the highest of all christian authorities, there is no power but of god, the powers that be are ordained of god; and if so, those who resisted the mad Caligula, resisted the power, resisted the ordinance of god, and shall receive unto themselves eternal damnation. Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest, these *sacred* principles, ye gabblers about the alliance of liberty with christianity. Are ye not ashamed of a religion that prescribes *damnation* to every patriot, to every gallant resister of tyranny, though he have *more* than the glorious virtues of a Cato, or a Washington? Why, if Paul were not an arch impostor, there is a hell for all who dare strike for freedom. If the power of Cæsar were ordained of god, how shall Brutus, Cassius, and their gallant companions, escape damnation? If he who

resisteth *the* power, resisteth the ordinance of god, what can become of the poor souls of Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, Paine, and others, who incited and aided the *once* enslaved Americans, to throw off the accursed domination of their mother country? Then, how dare any radical hypocrites get up in our public assemblies to talk about the liberalising influence of their christianity. Out upon them, and christianity too! "Age thou art (indeed) shamed." England has lost (that is, if ever she had) a "breed of noble bloods"—for certainly such a troop of amphibious, half-witted, half-honest animals, as nine-tenths of our political leaders, never till now disgraced the cause of freedom. Let the people beware of religious politicians, for all the good they will ever accomplish would be dear at a bunch of dog's meat—while the mischief their canting unprincipled agitation never fails to produce, beggars all calculation. But I must not let disgust of such wretched compounds of fraud and imbecility, turn my attention from Saint Peter, who, whatever may be said of him in other respects, was not an inch behind St Paul in preaching up "the right divine of kings to govern wrong." This fine fellow tells us, in the first epistle general, first chapter, that he is "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ"—to begin with—and in the second chapter (13, 14, and 15 verses), to "submit ourselves to every ordinance of man for the lord's sake—whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them who do well. For *so is the will of god*, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of men." These doctrines, and even words, are so very like those quoted above, from the other saint, that we cannot but suspect that Peter borrowed from Paul, or Paul borrowed from Peter—or that the borrowing was mutual. However this may be, it is clear that Paul and Peter, *immorally* speaking, were as much alike as the Siamese twins, physically speaking. Both were, evidently, unblushing favourers of despotism, from the great pains they took to make their followers contented slaves, happily pious lickspoons of feet that trod them to the dust. Peter taught that Neros and Elagabaluses were sent by the lord for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. The lord having sent such bloody tyrants, 'twas quite consistent in Peter to recommend their ordinances should be submitted to, for the lord's sake—but, if supernatural messengers at all, I am of opinion the devil sent them. Oh, Peter, Peter, or whoever penned thy epistles, and made thy speeches, thou hadst within thee all the odious feelings of a sacerdotal tyrant—thou didst labour hard to root out

The wish that ages has not yet subdued
In man, to have no master save his mood,

and thy success was great, though not complete. What an admirable auxilliary would my lords Sidmouth and Castlereagh have found in Saint Peter, could heaven have spared its locker-up. Castlereagh complained bitterly of an "ignorant impatience of taxation," manifested by the best of christians under his government—but how smoothly he could have managed money matters, if Paul had come down from heaven or up from the other place, and said, "He (Castlereagh) is a minister of god, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath but also for conscience sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also," &c. Who could then complain of tyranny and taxation? None, surely, but an Infidel—for christian politicians cannot grumble with a good grace, when they are governed upon christian principles.

SUPERNATURALISM,

CONSIDERED AS A QUESTION OF MORAL INFLUENCE.

III.

I HAVE firm faith in the moralising influence of reason—but no faith in faith—not a grain of faith in the moralising influence of god belief, devil belief, or supernatural belief of any imaginable kind—and having brushed away the cobweb sophisms of those who appeal to the wickedness of religionists in proof of religion's excellence—it will now be needful to inquire what really constitutes morality. Some have defined it as *the practice of reason*—a definition that seems perfect. I have met with a prodigious number, but no other definition, strikes me as so *concise*, and at the same time *just*, as this—for surely nothing moral can be unreasonable, and nothing reasonable can be immoral. Pure morals and right reason have been universally allowed to lend each other mutual support—morality strengthening reason, and reason strengthening morality. The Antinomian christians of a by-gone age, dared to teach that good acts were an *impediment* to salvation—but happily so monstrous a doctrine did not spread far, or take deep root, even in the rankest soil of fanaticism. The spirit of *this* age is directly antagonistic to such doctrine. He would be a preacher bold as bad, who should now declare, from bench or pulpit, that good works are an *impediment* to any kind of salvation. According to Hume, the Antinomians taught that the obligations of morality and natural law were suspended—and that the elect, guided

by an internal principle, more perfect and divine, were superior to the *beggarly elements* of justice and humanity. My opinion of supernaturalists is low, indeed, but I doubt whether the most religious of them would now tolerate such teaching. Priests, in general, practically assert their own superiority to the *beggarly elements* of justice and humanity—but they find it most profitable and safest to honour them with their lips. They would much rather, as god's *elect*, be guided by an internal principle than any external authority—but there has grown up among us an amount of popular feeling in favour of *conventional* morality, and the *terms* justice and humanity, that even priests will not venture to disregard. I say *conventional* morality, because it is the morality of custom, not of reason. There is little or no practice of reason, which alone constitutes *moral action*. I emphasise, also, *terms* justice and humanity, because I know people in general are more conversant with words than things, and laud in theory that justice and humanity they scruple not to outrage in practice. It has been demonstrated in our former volume of reason, that religion and morality rest on bases essentially different—faith being the fundamental principle of religion, while knowledge is the fundamental principle of morals.

If supernaturalism were reasonable—did it add to, or harmonise with human experience, then, indeed, it might be presumed to have a moralising influence. But the fact is, whatever shape religion assumes, its nature is invariably antagonistic to knowledge. The most religious individuals *generally*, and the most religious nations *universally*, are the *least wise*, therefore the *most vile*. Where shall we look for a viler, a more despicable people than the Portuguese? and yet they are extremely religious. The Portuguese are ignorant, to be sure, but then “ignorance is the mother of devotion.” A wisely knowing people would cast off every vestige of religion, and I assert, as an incontrovertible axiom, that religious credulity is always in the inverse ratio of experimental and inductive knowledge. Religion not only discards experience, it runs directly in the teeth of it. The christian religion is true to the *unknowable* character—and in no respect more reasonable, or more moralising, than any others that *do* or *did* torment the human race. David Hume said it was necessary to conclude, not only “that the christian religion was at first attended with miracles, but even at this day cannot be believed without one. Mere reason (said he) is insufficient to convince us of its veracity—and whoever is moved by faith to assent to it, is conscious of a continued miracle in his own person, which subverts all the principles of his understand-

ing, and gives him a determination to believe what is most contrary to custom and experience.” Now, I should be glad to learn how such a religion can tend to improve reason, or lead its devotees to practice it—how we can hope for ripe and sound judgment among a people who make a merit, a positive virtue, of believing “what is most contrary to custom and experience?” The christian religion is lauded by christians in the most extravagant manner—it is pronounced the most divine of divine religions—and yet it is not too much to affirm (for I can prove it) that the *best christians* are the *worst men*. I never yet met a sincere christian, who was not either excessively weak, or excessively base. It may be urged that Howard was a sincere christian, and, *perhaps*, he was, but certainly not a hell-fire one—not a thick and thin believer—not a Christ and crust fanatic—but one of the few good men, who separated the wheat from the chaff, the good from the bad, of christian precept, and clung to the former, while abhorring the latter. We hear nothing of his excessive zeal in the cause of religion, and who has not heard with emotions of gratitude and delight, of the sacrifices he made to extend the liberty, mitigate the sufferings, and promote the morality of his fellow-creatures? Whoever dreams of Howard the christian, when talking of Howard the philanthropist? He was a christian, and something more—he *was a man*. Had he been more fanatical and less human, the virulence of faith would infallibly have corrupted the benevolence of his nature. I deny not, I never have denied, that there are good individual professors of all creeds. A multitude of facts leave me no room to doubt that there are individuals of most happy genius in all countries, who have, by a kind of natural talent or instinct, risen superior to the religion of their ancestors, and broken through those nets of false custom which for ever entangle *common* men. It is only by considering the aggregate influence of supernaturalism, that we can approximate to a correct appreciation of its real value, or rather, real mischief to society. Paley was, or affected to be, so satisfied of religion's influence, and the utter vanity of attempting to moralise men without it, that he declared *indifference* with regard to religion, a far more awful, mischievous, and criminal state of mind, than active belief in the worst and wildest faith that was ever imposed upon human credulity. Paley cannot be received as very high authority upon moral subjects. The theologian who was not ashamed to confess he *couldn't afford to keep a conscience*, is now justly considered a sorry and dangerous guide upon moral questions. As to the opinion itself, it is too glaringly sophistical to need a lengthened refutation. I might

content myself with placing in juxta position the philosophical *indifference* of Socrates, and the murderous enthusiasm of Ravaiillac. Socrates was, perhaps, the greatest of all moral philosophers,

Whom, well inspired, the oracle pronounced,
Wiseest of men—

yet he was an *indifferent* supernaturalist—a sneerer at godism—who insisted that *he only knew nothing could be known*. Ravaiillac was neither a philosopher nor indifferent about heavenly matters, but an intolerant assassin, who thought he did god and religion service, by murdering the best of kings. If Paley's doctrine be sound, the Ravaiillacs are far more respectable characters than the Socrateses.

I read, in Father Bongerel (an historian of Provence) of a certain Jew, who was accused of having blasphemed against the blessed virgin—and, upon conviction, was condemned to be flayed alive. A strange spectacle was then seen!—*gentlemen christians, masked, with knives in their hands, ascended the scaffold, and drove away the executioner, in order to be the avengers themselves of the honour of the blessed virgin*. Montesquieu, who copies this fact into his "Spirit of Laws," concludes by observing, "I do not here choose to anticipate the reflections of my reader." Nor do I of mine. Here is the fact of a Jew, about to be flayed alive for a very questionable offence, if offence at all—but the true believers in a wise, good, omnipotent being, could not brook delay, the executioner was too tardy for them, so they mounted the scaffold, knife in hand, to hew the limbs and hack out the heart of a blaspheming Jew. These are the characters, such wise *conscientious* men as Paley infinitely prefer to those whose only crime is *indifference* to supernaturalism—*indifference* to that theoretical jargon and practical wickedness which, under the name of religion, is permitted in all countries to blight the reason, corrupt the morals, and destroy the happiness of their inhabitants.

(FROM THE GERMAN.)

"The translation is very faithful.—*Weekly Dispatch*.

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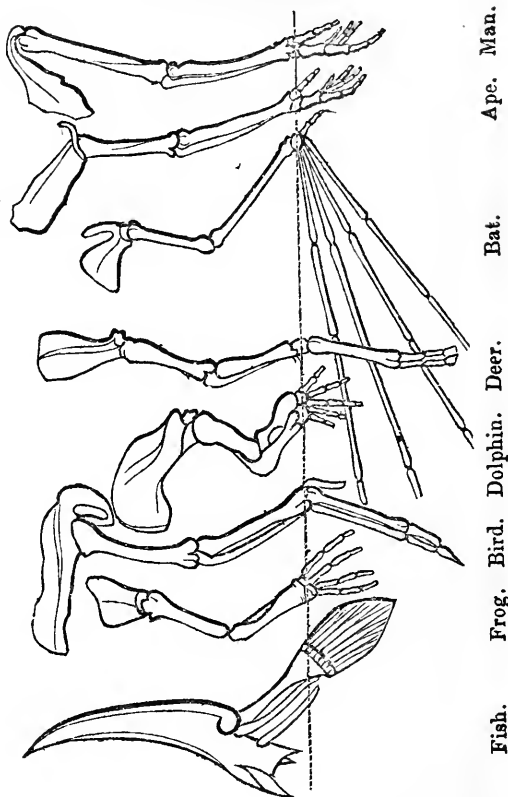
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ANTERIOR EXTREMITIES

Of several species.



THEORY OF REGULAR GRADATION.

XXIX.

It is necessary, before re-commencing my duties under the above head, to state, that it was my intention to have begun the second volume with a description of the *mammalia*, the only remaining class of the animal kingdom, which I have not described. My design was, however, frustrated, or at least materially interfered with, by the outrages committed at our publishing office—comments and circumstances arising out of which occupied both time and room, to the exclusion of the usual serial articles. I hope I shall not again, before I conclude, absent myself for so long a time—but, inasmuch as the cause was independent of myself, I have little doubt of receiving forgiveness, if I have given displeasure.

[As I purpose giving a table, at the conclusion of my summary of the comparative form of the skeletons of the *mammalia*, explanatory of the various scientific terms used in describing the bones, it is unnecessary that I should explain as I go on.]

I think at this stage of our inquiry a short description of the external configuration of

the bones will be found useful—and though I shall confine myself to the bones of man, the reader will readily apply it to other animals. Viewing the bones in respect to form only, anatomists have generally divided them into four classes, the three first of which are founded on their geometrical dimensions, and are called long, flat, and short bones—whilst a fourth has been added, which includes all those whose form is so irregular that they cannot properly be placed in either of the preceding classes—as the ribs, inferior maxilla, &c., which partake both of the characters of the long and flat bones. If, however, we extend the basis of our classification, and consider the bones, not merely in reference to their form, but with respect, also, to the degree of motion they enjoy, the structure they exhibit, and the uses to which they are subservient, we shall find that all of them may be included in the three classes, long, short, and flat bones—which, it must be remembered, are not distinguished merely by their different dimensions, but also by certain peculiarities and properties common to the bones of each class.

The long bones (*ossa longa vel cylindrica*) are peculiarly characterised by the great preponderance of their length, by possessing a wide extent of motion, and by their capability of being moved upon each other, so as materially to change their relative position—as in contraction and extension—a property not possessed by either of the other classes. They are, also, further distinguished by the possession of a medullary canal, and other peculiarities of structure, as well as by the different offices they have to perform. The long bones are found only in the extremities, where they form a series of levers and fixed points for the attachment of muscles, by which the varied movements of locomotion and prehension are performed—in the lower extremities they form organs of support, sustaining the body in the erect position, and during the act of progression. Their conformation is analogous, being thick and voluminous at their extremities, contracted, and generally rounded or triangular in their middle portion, which is called the body—thus affording larger surfaces for articulation, broader bases of support, and contributing to regularity in the form of the limb—their contracted bodies corresponding to the fleshy bellies of the muscles, whilst their expanded extremities compensate for the attenuated cords by which the latter terminate. On examining them in different parts of the limbs, they are found successively to diminish in size, and increase in number, from above downwards—from which disposition it follows, that the upper regions of the limbs enjoy a wider latitude of motion, while the lower are more restricted, but capable of a greater variety of motions.

The short or thick bones (*ossa crassa*) are found to constitute those parts of the skeleton wherein it is necessary that solidity and motion should be combined—as in the carpus, tarsus, and spinal column. They are generally of small size, and associated in considerable numbers—to which arrangement they owe the two properties just mentioned. Solidity, because the force of external violence is expended in the wide surface by which they are connected—and mobility, because from their partial motions there results an extensive general one. With respect to form, the bones of this class are very irregular, their several dimensions are nearly equal, and they are much modified by the uses of the parts into whose composition they enter. They present numerous surfaces, angles, and depressions, and their figures are, for the most part, rhomboidal, trapezoidal, or cuneiforme. Their motion upon each other is very limited—they are not capable of being changed in their relative position without displacement—and they are fitted for variety, rather than extent, of motion. Their structure is simple, being almost entirely composed of the cellular tissue, which is covered by a thin layer of the compact.

The broad or flat bones (*ossa lata*). The bones of this class are distinguished by having their dimensions of length and breadth nearly in equal proportions—but each greatly preponderating over their thickness. Their opposite surfaces are convex and concave—they are thin in the middle, gradually increasing in thickness towards their margins—thus affording broader surfaces for articulation, as in the bones of the cranium—or for the attachment of muscles, as in those of the pelvis. In the adult subject, we find the bones of this class still more restricted in motion than those of the preceding—they are incapable of being moved upon each other, and possess merely a slight degree of yielding, which they owe to the elasticity of the substances by which they are connected. The ribs, however, form an exception to the rule just laid down, as they are possessed of considerable motion, which is essential to the due performance of respiration—but for this they are principally indebted to the cartilages by which their anterior extremities are connected to the sternum. The bones of the head, too, in infancy, possess a greater extent of motion than in after life, being capable of overlapping each other, as during the progress of parturition. On examining the structure of the flat bones, we find it different from either of the preceding classes—they have no medullary canal, which peculiarly distinguishes the long bones, nor are they of so cellular a texture as those of the short—but totally different from either. They are composed of two layers of compact tissue, with an intervening layer of cellular,

which is called diploe. The two plates of compact tissue are not, however, of the same consistence—but the internal is denser and more brittle than the external, bearing considerable analogy to the enamel of the teeth, as is best seen in the bones of the cranium. With regard to the uses of this class of bones, they appear to be principally of service in the formation of cavities for the protection of the several viscera of the head, chest, and pelvis—they are not connected with locomotion, further than by giving attachment to the muscles which move the long bones.

To resume,

The number of vertebræ contained in the spine of the mammalia, is very variable—but the human type is by far the most generally predominant. The dorsal vertebræ range from twenty-three, as seen in the unau, *bradypus didactylus*, to twelve, as represented by man, mice, rabbits, hares, and several apes. In the megatherium there are sixteen, in the horse eighteen, and in the elephant twenty. The lumbar vertebræ are generally seven—they vary, however, there being two in the two-toed ant-eater, and nine in the lori. The sacral vertebræ are seven in the mole—in the vampire bat, opossum, and some apes, there is but a single sacral vertebra, the usual number being three. The caudal vertebræ are four in man and the orang-outang—forty in the two-toed ant-eater—and in the vampire bat they are altogether absent.

In most animals, it has been said, that the head and neck together equal in length the fore-feet, except where the latter are used as hands, as in the apes and rodentia. The neck attains its greatest length in the genus *camelus*, and is shortest in the order cetacea, owing to the consolidation of the vertebræ. According to the statement of Gore, the number of cervical vertebræ in certain of the cetacea, as the *balæna*, manatee, and dugong, amounts only to six. In the rodentia, and most long-necked animals, the spinous processes are almost wanting. The atlas, in the carnivora, ruminantia, solipida, pachydermata, &c., is distinguished by its length, and by its large aliform transverse processes. The free motion and beautiful arch observed in the necks of some horses, camels, &c. is explained by the bodies of the cervical vertebræ having a perfect articular head on their upper surface, and a corresponding depression on their lower, similar to what is observed in the necks of serpents, with this difference, that the surfaces are reversed. The ruminantia, rhinoceros, elephant, &c. are remarkable for the great length of the spinous processes of the dorsal vertebræ. Bats have scarcely any spinous processes—and, with the exception of the second dorsal, they are short in the rodentia. In the lumbar vertebræ the form of the transverse processes is

very variable—almost absent in bats, very strong in the ruminantia, rodentia, and carnivora. The megatherium possesses long spinous processes. In the sloth, the length, breadth, and consolidation of the sacral vertebræ remind us of the sacrum of birds. The few first only of the caudal vertebræ in mammalia contain a prolongation of the vertebral canal. Animals with long moveable tails, as the two-toed ant-eater, have oblong triangular processes on the under surface of the caudal vertebræ, as in the crocodile. The connection of the vertebræ is almost always by means of interarticular cartilage, as in man, and consists of concentric rings, most evident in the whale. In the pig and rabbit the interarticular cavities are filled with an albuminous fluid, as in fishes.

Man has seven true and five false ribs—the *balæna* whale, one true and eleven false—in the unau, or two-toed sloth, there are twenty-three pairs, of which eleven are false—in the horse eighteen, and eight of them false—in wolves, cats, and some apes, there are thirteen pairs, four of which are false—in the guinea pig, armadillo, and porpoise there are thirteen, of which seven are false in the manatee, of sixteen pairs, but two are true—in the dugong but three out of eighteen—and in the *ornithorhynchus* but six out of seventeen. The breadth of the ribs is greater in the ruminantia, pachydermata, in the manatee, and especially in the two-toed ant-eater, than in the other mammalia.

The human ribs (*costæ*) are long narrow bones, curved in the direction of their length, and flattened from within outwards. They form a series of arches stretched between the vertebral column and the sternum, thus constituting the lateral boundaries of the chest. Although their length so greatly predominates over their other dimensions, they do not partake of the other characters of the long bones, and are placed with the flat bones. Their length gradually increases from the first to the eighth, and then diminishes to the twelfth—their breadth gradually diminishes from the first to the last. The twelve ribs on either side are divided into two classes—the seven superior have one extremity attached to the spine, and the other by means of its cartilage to the sternum, they are hence called vertebro-sternal or true ribs—the five inferior have no connection with the sternum, and are termed asternal or false ribs. Of the second class, the three upper have their cartilages blended with each other, and united to that of the seventh—the two last are perfectly isolated from the rest, and terminate in a free point, they are occasionally called loose or floating ribs

PART I. of the second volume of the ORACLE is now ready, stitched in a wrapper. Five Numbers, price Fivepence.

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of the Oracle of Reason.

SIR.—You have begun the war, therefore you will not think the following, like the monkey, making a “cat’s paw” of you. You and your colleagues have loosened the stones and foundation—they, the thieves, hypocrites, and bigots, fear its tumbling about their ears—they tremble at the thought of coming fairly to stand at the bar of public opinion, which will be found, at length, the real bar of justice. Do you wish to bring down the crazy building you have undermined, retreat not from the breach you have made—give them no time to fill up the gap, but fully set out principle. You must not tamper with yourselves at this crisis, by encouraging an enslaving, villainous, truckling and unworthy prudence, which has been the curse of all that have preceded us, in keeping the world still in wretchedness and slavery.

You have begun nobly. Onward, then, follow up the attack, and victory is yours. Down comes superstition and villany with a crash! At present the wicked, the proud, the petty, and spiteful are crowing and chuckling over you—look out for the right way to give them a “Roland for their Oliver.” Shall they still continue arrogant and strong in iniquity and falsehood?—and will you for a moment fall back in weakness in the cause of truth?—forbid it, justice!

Put out your placard in large characters in front of your house, and out of the reach of meddlers — “*Damnation to christianity — success to truth and the ‘Oracle of Reason.’*” Let this be succeeded by others of boldness and consistency, as the time and purpose serves, and you rise to success and true greatness, spite of the mighty who seek to crush you—it is the turn which leads on to fortune, in your lives, neglect this stroke of bold generalship, and you remain in Wychstreet, in quiet obscurity—giving victory to others in the future, which may now be yours—and as great events often spring from little causes, give emancipation and happiness to the world.

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II.

THE FABLE OF PROMETHEUS,

Explained of an over-ruling providence, and of human nature.

THE ancients relate that man was the work of Prometheus, and formed of clay—only the artificer mixed in with the mass, particles taken from different animals. And being desirous to improve his workmanship, and endow, as well as create, the human race—he stole up to heaven with a bundle of birch rods, and kindling them at the chariot of the sun, thence brought down fire to the earth, for the service of men.

They add, that for this meritorious act, Prometheus was repayed with ingratitude by mankind—so that, forming a conspiracy, they accused both him and his invention to Jupiter. But the matter was otherwise received than they imagined—for the accusation proved extremely grateful to Jupiter and the gods—insomuch, that delighted with the action, they not only indulged mankind the use of fire, but moreover conferred upon them a most acceptable and desirable present, viz. perpetual youth.

But men, foolishly overjoyed hereat, laid this present of the gods upon an ass, who, in returning back with it, being extremely thirsty, and coming to a fountain, the serpent who was guardian thereof would not suffer him to drink, but upon condition of receiving the burden he carried, whatever it should be. The silly ass complied—and thus the perpetual renewal of youth was, for a sup of water, transferred from men to the race of serpents.

Prometheus not desisting from his unwarrantable practices, though now reconciled to mankind, after they were thus tricked of their present, but still continuing inveterate against Jupiter, had the boldness to attempt deceit, even in a sacrifice—and is said to have once offered up two bulls to Jupiter, but so as, in the hide of one of them, to wrap all the flesh and fat of both, and stuffing out the other hide only with the bones—then, in a religious and devout manner, gave Jupiter his choice of the two. Jupiter detecting this sly fraud and hypocrisy, but having thus an opportunity of punishing the offender, purposely chose the mock bull.

And now giving way to revenge, but finding he could not chastise the insolence of Prometheus, without afflicting the human race (in the production whereof Prometheus had strangely and insufferably prided himself), he commanded Vulcan to form a beautiful and graceful woman, to whom every god presented a certain gift, when she was called

Pandora. They put into her hands an elegant box, containing all sorts of miseries and misfortunes, but Hope was placed at the bottom of it. With this box she first goes to Prometheus, to try if she could prevail upon him to receive and open it—but he being on his guard, warily refused the offer. Upon this refusal, she comes to his brother, Epimetheus, a man of a very different temper, who rashly and inconsiderately opens the box. When finding all kinds of miseries and misfortunes issued out of it, he grew wise too late, and with great hurry and struggle endeavoured to clap the cover on again—but with all his endeavour could scarce keep in Hope, who lay at the bottom.

Lastly, Jupiter arraigned Prometheus of many heinous crimes—as that he formerly stole fire from heaven—that he contemptuously and deceitfully mocked him by a sacrifice of bones—that he despised his present (viz. that by Pandora)—adding withal a new crime, that he attempted to ravish Pallas—for all which he was sentenced to be bound in chains, and doomed to perpetual torments. Accordingly, by Jupiter's command, he was brought to Mount Caucasus, and there fastened to a pillar, so firmly, that he could no way stir. A vulture, or eagle stood by him, which in the day-time gnawed and consumed his liver, but in the night the wasted parts were supplied again, whence matter for his pain was never wanting.

They relate, however, that his punishment had an end—for Hercules sailing the ocean in a cup, or pitcher, presented him by the sun, came at length to Caucasus—shot the eagle with his arrows—and set Prometheus free. In certain nations also there were instituted particular games of the Torch, to the honour of Prometheus—in which they who run for the prize, carried lighted torches—and as any of these torches happened to go out, the bearer withdrew himself, and gave way to the next—and that person was allowed to win the prize, who first brought in his lighted torch to the goal.

Not only among the apostles, but by those who were called apostles themselves, was the reality of the crucifixion steadily denied. In the gospel of the apostle Barnabas, of which there is extant an Italian translation, written in 1470, or in 1480, which Toland himself saw, and which was sold by Cramer to prince Eugene, it is explicitly asserted, that “Jesus Christ was not crucified, but that he was taken up into the third heavens by the ministry of four angels, Gabriel, Michael, Raphael, and Uriel: that he should not die till the very end of the world, and that it was Judas Iscariot, who was crucified in his stead.” This account of the matter entirely

squares with the account which we have of the bitter and unappeasable quarrel which took place between Paul and Barnabas, in the acts of the apostles, without any satisfactory account of the ground of that quarrel; as well as with the fact that Paul seems always to have preferred imposing his gospel on the ignorant and credulous vulgar, and lays such a significant emphasis on the distinction that he preached “Jesus Christ, and him crucified,” as if in marked opposition to his former patron, Barnabas, who preached Jesus Christ, but not crucified. The Basilidians, in the very beginning of christianity, in like manner denied that Christ was crucified, and asserted that it was Simon of Cyrene, who was crucified in his place: which account of the matter stood its ground from the first to the seventh century, and was the form in which christianity presented itself to the mind of Mahomet, who, after instructing us how the Virgin Mary conceived by smelling a rose, tells us, that “the Jews devised a stratagem against him, but god devised a stratagem against them, and god is the best deviser of stratagems.” “The malice of his enemies aspersed his reputation, and conspired against his life, but their intention only was guilty, a phantom or a criminal was substituted on the cross, and the innocent Jesus was translated into the seventh heaven.” So much for the evidence of the crucifixion of Christ! —Diegesis.

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Saturday, January 28, 1843.

THE ORACLE OF REASON:

Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

“FAITH’S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE”

EDITED BY THOMAS PATERSON.

*Originally Edited by CHARLES SOUTHWELL, sentenced, on January 15, 1842,
to Twelve Months’ Imprisonment in Bristol Gaol, and to pay a fine of £100, [PRICE 1D.*

*for Blasphemy, contained in No. 4.
Second Editor, G. J. HOLYOAKE, sentenced, on August 15, 1842, to Six Months’
Imprisonment in Gloucester Gaol, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.*

“THE DEIST.”

It was only a day or two since my attention was drawn to an article in the *Deist*, reflecting on my conduct, which should have been sooner answered, if sooner seen.

The editor of that periodical has taken considerable pains to prove me a coward, and to support his arguments he has given a garbled statement of the facts connected with the Holywell-street blasphemy cases—totally suppressing that portion of the proceedings which would, of itself, have given the lie to his insinuations. He begins with the last act of the drama—namely, my non-attendance at Bow-street, in answer to the four summonses—as best suited, when isolated from the previous ones, to serve his purposes. Instead of commencing with my appearance in reply to the first summons, when I came off victorious—and then stating my subsequent demand of the money for the broken windows, to do which I had travelled expressly from Gloucester, in consequence of the threat of the magistrate that it would be better for me to keep away, for I was in that town when the Bruce robbery took place—instead of doing this, which a really honest opponent would have done, he begins at the end, and with sneers, and jibes, and cant about sorrow, produces the most malicious and pitiable article of all the god mongers, upon my much talked of conduct, that I have yet seen.

The editor of the *Deist* talks of my attitudinising like a “war horse,” and other martial nonsense—says that I “bolted”—that another denied himself—and that we are all too great cowards, in allusion to the advice of one of our correspondents, ever to kill a man. All facts are admitted to prove that this is the common practice of men who wish such deeds to be done—by others, that they might escape scot free from the consequences. This course, which the world has stamped as worse than cowardice, is easily and safely pursued from behind a desk, whence the bad passions and angry feelings are worked upon, and men are induced to the commission of folly and crime—the end

sought to be obtained being their punishment and degradation, the really guilty party not forgetting, in the sequel, to deplore and deprecate the violence of which he alone was the originator and deviser.

The editor of the *Deist* concludes with the following—“If the spirit manifested in No. 55 of the *Oracle*, be a fair expression of the mind which actuates the Atheists of this country, let them no longer complain of persecution, it is very plain that if they had the power, they would be quite as virulent persecutors as their enemies, the bigots—if not more so.” Where, I would ask, in No. 55, or in any number of the *Oracle*, is there any evidence of a wish to persecute? Is the expression of a determination to resist robbery and violence a proof of it?—if it be, then is the exercise of moral force open to the same objection, for men can be scowled down as well as knocked down, they can be “sent to Coventry” as easily as to prison. Unfortunately for our editor, my conduct throughout the whole of this scandalous god business has been based upon the non-resistance principle. When Bruce committed an act of violence, and stole my property, I asked for a warrant against him—and so likewise in the cases of the other two robbers. Denied the protection of the law, in no instance have I committed personal harm on my opponents, though I consider I should have been justified in so doing, when the magistrate declared it was out of his power to protect me, and of course implied that I must protect myself, as best I could. Brute force, unjustifiable in aggression, may be commendable in defence, especially when the attacked party is excluded from legal protection.

In conclusion, I will remark, the goddists wish their enemies to fight just at the time and in the style they think most convenient for their own ends. What they call a fair stand-up fight is, as stated by “Publicola”—“now you strike me as I tell you, and leave me to cut away as I like.” Now, however anxious I may be to give them battle, I hope I am not so silly as to throw away a chance of returning blow for blow, or mayhap of adding interest, and a compound one too, to their principal. Neither am I to

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THE ORACLE OF REASON.

be goaded on to an indiscreet step, from a false principle of valour, by the taunts and sneers of professing friends to freedom. I am quite ready, as at first, to combat for the cause in which I enlisted—the cause of freedom of expression—and in which I thought I was assisting Deists equally with Atheists—but I shall not gratify would-be-thought liberals by leaving to their discretion when I shall fight, and when I shall not—nor inform doubtful or pretended friends or concealed enemies *how* I mean to carry on the war. I shall meet the consequence of my actions, when the fitting time for doing so arrives—and of that time myself, and the friends acting with me must be permitted to be the

best judges, seeing that we are acquainted with all the circumstances of the case, of which the apathetic, the sham-liberal, or the open enemy are very properly kept in the dark. The editor of the *Deist* would twit me to surrender myself, bound hand and foot, to the tender mercies of christian magistrates. This is not my intention, and I much question if he would so act, if similarly situated. No—I shall fight a battle, in which I hope to conquer. Should I not succeed, Deists may suffer next, and the temple of justice upset, the ruins may overwhelm all the Philistine goddists, who think, like the editor of the *Deist*, to make sport of their victim.

T. P.

“ See how plain a tale will put you down.”

LOOK ON THIS PICTURE,

The person (Paterson) whose name was cried inside the court, and echoed outside the court, is a young man who professes to be a firm, bold, determined Atheist—one who would never flinch, who almost longed for persecution, like the christian martyrs of old, in order that he might have an opportunity of displaying his valour before an astonished and admiring world. Well, at length, a little skirmishing begins between the police-office in Bow-street and the *Oracle* office in the Strand. There are some signs that the ardent ambition of the young Atheist, who was prancing like a war-horse, in his eagerness for the battle, will be gratified. But, alas, let not him that putteth on his armour boast as him that putteth it off—when the hour of battle came, the young Atheist rushed—not into the action, as might have been expected by some—he rushed the other way as fast as possible. In plain English—he belted. There is nothing like putting a good bold face upon the matter—and if one cannot boast of having fought bravely, he may, at least, be allowed the poor satisfaction of bragging that he ran away—that he “out-generalled” the enemy by showing him his back.—*Deist*, No. 5.

AND ON THIS.

THE HOLYWELL-STREET AFFAIR.—Mr. Jardine received a note this morning, by the hands of Clarke, the boy of No. 8, Holywell-street, from Paterson, stating that he (Paterson) understood that warrants were out against him, for exposing certain prints to public view, and he was therefore ready, at the convenience of the magistrate, to have the case gone into. Mr. Jardine returned for answer, that he could not act in the matter, it rested with the chief magistrate (as our reporter understood).—*Sun*, Jan. 24.

REVIVAL OF THE PATERSON NUISANCE.—The man Paterson, whose exhibition of blasphemous and indecent pictures, bills, and publications, in Holywell-street, was suppressed not long ago, has taken a shop in Wych-street, nearly at the back of his former abode, and continued in the same line of business. For several days past his new shop has had in the windows books of much the same kind as those which, a short time since, so greatly excited the public indignation. Yesterday the offence was greatly aggravated, by the display, outside, of a placard, upon which was written, “Paterson at home—from nine till two o’clock.”—*Herald*, Jan. 25.

Mr. Jardine said, “If he was to judge from the notes the prisoner had sent to the court, he had been ready to attend for some days.”—*Times Report*, Jan. 27.

BOW STREET POLICE COURT.

(Condensed from the *Times*.)

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 1843.

THE man, Thomas Paterson, against whom a number of summonses have for some time been issued, for the exhibition of certain blasphemous publications in Holywell-street,

but who has hitherto refused to attend to them, was yesterday morning taken into custody upon a warrant, and brought to this court.

Mr. Chambers, barrister, attended by Mr. Hayward, from the office of Mr. Maule, solicitor to the treasury, appeared to conduct the prosecution.

Mr. Thomas appeared for the defence.

Mr. Chambers said the prisoner was charged under the 47th chapter of 2 and 3 Victoria, by the 56th section of which it was enacted that any person who should sell, or exhibit to public view, any obscene book, print, &c., in any public thoroughfare, to the annoyance of the inhabitants or passengers, should be liable to a penalty not exceeding 40s. He should prove that on the 6th of December the prisoner exhibited, in a public thoroughfare, a certain profane and blasphemous paper, which he (Mr. Chambers) would not then further allude to, as it would be quite sufficient to offend the ears of the magistrate by reading it once.

Mr. Thomas considered it his duty, in the first instance, to object to the jurisdiction of a magistrate entertaining the charge in question: the hearing of the complaint would much depend upon the magistrate's construction of the powers given him under the clause alluded to by his learned friend, because it was evident, he (Mr. T.) presumed, that he could not adjudicate under any other statute. By the act of the 10th George IV., c. 44, an act passed for improving the police of the metropolis, great powers were given to the police, and those powers were greatly increased by the subsequent act of the 2nd and 3rd Victoria, both of which acts he apprehended must be taken together and read as one. Now, by those acts, he contended that the police had power to act in the streets, in thoroughfares, and in public places, and large powers were given them to take into custody persons committing any of the offences enumerated in the acts. Such cases were clearly within the meaning of the act, and admitted of no dispute, and the police had an undoubted right to bring such public offenders before the magistrate to be dealt with as he might deem fit. He (Mr. Thomas) called upon the magistrate, as a lawyer, to put a fair construction upon those acts, penal acts, and not to strain the language in order to meet any particular case. He confidently submitted that the alleged charge against the prisoner was not one of those offences committed in a public thoroughfare which would justify the police in taking him into custody. Suppose the constable saw the prisoner sticking up in his window one of the placards, and went into the shop for the purpose of taking him into custody, would he not be justified in defending himself against such an act? If so, it was not an offence which came within the meaning of the statute. On a question of that kind, who was to determine whether such a paper was profane? No two magistrates, he apprehended, would determine alike—if they went before a Jew magistrate he would determine that the christian religion was profane—so with other magistrates

of different religious creeds. If the present charge was entertained, the magistrate would have to determine whether the placard in question was profane or blasphemous, and if he decided in the affirmative, he would have plenty of them to decide upon. Wherever the word "thoroughfare" was mentioned in the act, it distinctly alluded to offences committed in the street, for whenever powers are given to policemen to enter shops, these shops are specifically named. By another act passed in the 5th and 6th Victoria, for the purpose of defining the powers of magistrates, it was decided that no magistrate, either by himself or in sessions, should decide upon cases of such a description. The present proceedings were intended (for the fact could not be blinked) to "screw" the magistrates to give decisions upon such questions.

Police-sergeant F 6 stated, that on the evening of the 6th of December, he went with another constable to the shop No. 8, Holywell-street, Strand, which is a public thoroughfare, and much frequented. A great many persons were round the window. There was a placard in the window, within about an inch of the glass. He took a copy of the paper, which he now produced, and, whilst doing so, he saw the prisoner in the shop. The persons outside the shop were reading the placards, their standing there created a great obstruction; and they expressed their disgust that such indecencies should be allowed, and wished to have the prisoner pulled out of the shop. They were making such a noise as was likely to lead to a breach of the peace.

Mr. George Tyler, watchmaker, of No. 15, Holywell-street, stated that he had known the prisoner for about three months previous to the 6th of December. Had frequently seen him put placards in the window, and had also seen him alter them. Very great mobs were frequently collected, and he had on more than one occasion, when disapprobation was expressed, gone out and threatened to blow out their brains. On one occasion, witness saw a person break the prisoner's windows, and he refused to tell him who did it. He refused to do so, because he thought he was not deserving of commiseration.

Mr. Thomas then addressed the bench for nearly two hours. He contended that the charge had not been made out, and intimated that if any fine was imposed, it would not be paid, but the prisoner would do everything in his power to assert his rights. The learned counsel complained of the manner in which the public press had treated his client, which he described as being intended to influence the magistrates to strain the law, in order to punish an individual for doing that which in his conscience he believed to be right, and for the purpose of doing good.

Mr. Jardine said he had been very much struck with some of the observations of the learned counsel. He, however, did not grant the summons, and he wished his learned colleague had been present to hear the case, as his opinions would have had greater weight. He could not say the present was so clear a case of exhibition to public view as he had heard. He, however, relied upon the real meaning of the act, and it appeared to him that the exhibition of a forbidden paper in a shop window was an exhibition in a public thoroughfare. Then, with respect to the offence having been committed by the prisoner, very strong evidence had been adduced upon that subject, though he was not actually seen to have put the placards in the window—if he had been seen to do so by the police, he thought they would be justified in taking him into custody. With respect to the placards, much might be said upon that point, and much difference of opinion might exist upon it, and also with respect to the proceedings. The main question, however, was, whether it was, in a christian country, a profane document. This being a christian country, the laws were made for the protection and upholding of the christian religion. Under all these circumstances, he was quite of opinion that it was a profane paper. Then, with respect to the annoyance, he perfectly agreed with Mr. Thomas, that it was necessary to prove an annoyance to the public—if the publications caused a crowd to collect and hiss and hoot, then there could be no doubt that it was an annoyance to the inhabitants. The paper was as foolish as it was wicked, and no person could read it without considering it so; but there were some persons whose feelings were so acute that they could not pass it off in such a manner, and hence the annoyance was created. That being the entire case, the only question was, what was to be done with the prisoner? He (Mr. Jardine) was sorry to hear that he was still pursuing the same course, and he assured him that if he continued to do so, it would end in his entire ruin. He should order the prisoner to pay a fine of 40s., and in default be committed to the house of correction for one month.

Mr. Thomas said the prisoner would certainly not pay the fine, and he hoped Mr. Jardine would not lend himself to crush a fallen man.

Mr. Chambers would at once declare, that it was the object of the government to crush a person who so outraged all the best feelings of society.

Mr. Thomas said he must go and obtain some refreshment, and should therefore leave the prisoner to defend himself in the next case.

The next charge was then proceeded with. The offence was committed on the 7th Dec.

The prisoner then commenced reading a document, consisting of about 50 pages, which he called his defence. He had read only a few pages, which consisted of a violent tirade against the press and the magistrates, and a tissue of the most disgusting and blasphemous expressions probably ever uttered, when Mr. Jardine said, that if he continued to make use of such language, he should take upon himself to commit him at once—he was not bound to sit there to hear such blasphemous trash.

The prisoner said, it was part of his defence, and he should go on with it as long as he thought proper.

Mr. Jardine told him that if he did so, he would order the document to be taken from him.

The prisoner again proceeded in the same strain for a considerable time, when

Mr. Chambers said, he must object to the prisoner being permitted to pursue such a course.—Mr. Jardine intimated that it had nothing whatever to do with the charge he was called upon to answer. It was very evident that his only object was to get his statement into the newspapers, but he was quite sure he would find himself deceived.

The prisoner again proceeded for some time in the same strain, to the evident disgust of a crowded court, who frequently expressed their disapprobation. Mr. Jardine, however, was at length compelled to put an end to it, and desired the document to be taken from the prisoner.—The gaoler took it away.

Prisoner (quietly taking up another document of the same size).—Very well. I have got plenty more, and I shall go on with them. He then continued in a similar strain for a considerable time longer, when

Mr. Jardine directed the second document to be taken from the prisoner, which was immediately done.

The prisoner took up a third document of similar dimensions, and was again proceeding to read from it, when Mr. Jardine told him, that unless he strictly confined himself to a legitimate defence of the charge, he would not hear him. It was preposterous to say that such disgusting trash had any bearing upon the case.

The prisoner said, that what he was reading was essentially necessary to his defence. He presumed, as the press had tried to put him down, the magistrate intended to do the same, but he would find that he was mistaken: "I am now going (said the prisoner) to read the first chapter of Exodus, in order to show there is nothing half so blasphemous in my publication as there is in the book called the bible."

Mr. Jardine said he would not hear any chapter read from the bible.

Prisoner.—Very well—then, to oblige you, I'll miss the scriptural quotations, and go to another part. He then went on to read two or three more pages of manuscript, till

Mr. Chambers said, he really felt it his duty to beg of the magistrate not to allow the prisoner to go on with his blasphemy. It could not be tolerated that a court of justice should be made the arena of such ribaldry.

Mr. Jardine warned the prisoner, for the last time, that unless he discontinued such language, he would at once decide the case.

The prisoner said, he would proceed to show, and he had no doubt he could do so satisfactorily, that the placard in question was not blasphemous.

Mr. Jardine intimated that he had a right to do so, if he could, and he would listen to him, if he would confine himself strictly to that point.—The prisoner again proceeded, but did not utter a single sentence by way of defence.

Mr. Jardine then ordered the paper to be taken from him, an order which was obeyed.

The prisoner said the magistrate was prejudiced against him—he considered he had been deprived of the means of defending himself. He had much yet to say, and ought to be allowed to proceed.

Mr. Jardine again told him that he was ready to hear anything he had to say.

The prisoner said he could not proceed without his papers.

Mr. Jardine considered the papers blasphemous, and therefore would not let him have them.

The prisoner intimated that all he had to say was of the same description as was contained in the papers. He should consider that he was not allowed to proceed with his defence.

Mr. Jardine did not wish to prevent his saying anything he thought proper, provided he applied himself strictly to answering the charge preferred against him.

The prisoner then produced several numbers of the *Oracle of Reason*, which he arranged before him in the front of the bar, and said he should have occasion to read them, and then pulled from his pocket a small bible, from which he began to read some passages from the book of Exodus.

Mr. Jardine said he would hear no more; and unless he at once desisted, he would have all his papers taken away from him.

At this period Mr. Thomas again entered the court, and wished to know what was going on? He thought he saw some documents taken from the prisoner's hand.

Mr. Jardine informed the learned gentleman what had been done in his absence.

Mr. Thomas said he considered the course pursued very unjustifiable; it would not have been done if he had been present.

Mr. Chambers wished his learned friend had been present, and then the court would have been spared the disgusting and blasphemous language which had been made use of.

Mr. Jardine said, that Mr. Thomas either defended the prisoner or he did not. He had distinctly refused to defend him in this case, and therefore they must get through it as well as they could.

The prisoner intimated that he should not say anything further, but would protest that he had not had a fair trial.

Mr. Jardine said his opinion with respect to the publication in this case was the same as in the last—there could be no doubt that it was profane and blasphemous. He should therefore order the prisoner to pay another fine of 40s. and costs, or be imprisoned one month.

The third summons was then called on, and

Mr. Thomas said he should again defend the prisoner.

The evidence in this case was very similar to the preceding ones, and the placard was exhibited on the same day as last, namely, the 7th of December.

Mr. Thomas again addressed the bench at very considerable length in defence of the prisoner, after which

Mr. Jardine said, he considered the case fully proved, and again convicted the prisoner in the penalty of 40s. and costs, or one month's imprisonment.

Mr. Chambers intimated, that he should go on with the other case, but

Mr. Jardine said, as it was very late, he should not proceed further then; the other case must be postponed till a future day.

Mr. Thomas applied to have the documents taken from the prisoner restored to him.

Mr. Chambers objected to such a course; he should ask to have the papers impounded.

Mr. Jardine said, he should certainly not give them up at present; they must remain in the custody of one of the officers of the court.

The prisoner was then conveyed to prison.

The proceedings did not terminate till nearly 11 o'clock.

GOD *versus* PATERSON.

THE EXTRAORDINARY PROFANE CASE.

Just Published,

A full and correct Report, taken expressly in shorthand notes, with all the suppressed passages, of the recent unprecedented Bow-street proceedings, at the instance of government, against "THE MAN PATERSON," late of Holywell-street, now of 46, WYCH-STREET, Strand, and TOTHILL-FIELDS, Westminster, for the alleged publication of PRO-FANE PAPERS.

London:—Office of the *Oracle of Reason*, 46, Wych-street, and all Booksellers and News-venders.

N.B. *The Profits of the Sale to be given to the fund of the "Anti-Persecution Union."*

ANATOMY OF HETERODOXIES,

SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF THE "ORACLE."

Definition for the unlearned—

Orthodoxy is my doxy—heterodoxy is any other man's doxy.—*Philpotts.*

The Blasphemer—Atheist and Republican—Free Thinker's Information for the People—Strauss's Life of Jesus—Voltaire's Philosophical Dictionary—Godwin's Political Justice—The Yahoo—The Deist—The Model Republic—and the Christian Warrior.

ALL connected with the *Oracle of Reason*, from its establishment by *Charles Southwell* and his coadjutor *W. C.*—throughout the career of its successive editors and contributors, to the present period of its safe deliverance into the hands of its projector, must experience a high degree of gratification at the successful issue of their endeavours. It has been an arduous and an honourable struggle, in which time, talent, labour, danger, daring, energy, funds, disinterestedness, and co-operation were needed and obtained. It was a bold experiment, boldly carried out, and, notwithstanding that the fury of fanaticism, the wealth of our political and social plunderers, the meshes of the law, the might of the executive, and the influence of a false, misdirected, and inflamed public opinion, were brought to bear against the small penny periodical and the subsequent efforts of its friends and supporters—all has, with a recent temporary exception, been carried on with the most admirable results. "Honesty," then, after all, "is the best policy." The power of principle has been proclaimed. Selfish and narrow expediency has received a mortal stab. The enduring might of principle has been displayed by an almost single-handed beginning, resulting in the present well-aided position, in which congenial spirits have been drawn together, as if by pre-concerted measures, to extend and strengthen the influence of the small band of anti-superstitionists. Nor is it alone from the co-operation and alliance connected with the *Oracle* that we derive satisfaction. A vast accession of strength has been obtained in the "Infidel" world, by the appearance of able rationalists and formidable opponents of faith, each working in his own circle. The *Blasphemer*, *Atheist and Republican*, certainly, after burning for a while, flickered and died—but not without shedding some light abroad. The latter, indeed, perished, not through want of readers, but of that sort of power of resistance at head quarters, without which an *extreme* work cannot subsist.

It has long been my wish, and partly my expectation, to see the revival of this well-projected work. I can conceive of no more powerful union for the accomplishment of good and the destruction of evil, than that of *atheism* and *republicanism*, which would need but one more ally, *socialism*, to regenerate humanity. That very able periodical, the *Freethinker's Information for the People*, followed, and has contributed largely to overthrow godly delusions of all sorts. *Strauss's Life of Jesus* has been well-timed, and a valuable auxiliary. I hailed it with lively satisfaction, as placing within reach of the hardworking mechanic an amount of historical research and philosophical investigation, in the right direction, hardly ever attained but in the theological schools of Germany. *Voltaire's Philosophical Dictionary*, a sharp thorn in the side of christianity, and *Godwin's Political Justice*, an admirable political and social digest, and a most accurately reasoned and condensed statement of sound principles, have both appeared in a cheap periodical form, since the year's career of our *Oracle*. The *Yahoo*, a terrific scourge for godmongers, mysterymen, quacks, and humbugs of all sorts, whether theological, political, social, or commercial, has also been republished in the cheap and easy way. In fact, instead of one small pennyworth of blasphemy, or political heterodoxy, we have a score—thus practically demonstrating that persecution and prosecution but strengthen the cause they aim to overturn, and further verifying, in our case, also, the memorable sentence applied by Robert Owen to the promulgation of his new and splendid views—silence will not retard, and opposition will but give increased celerity to their movements.

I am now brought to the consideration of our later contemporaries—*The Deist*, *The Christian Warrior*, and *The Model Republic*, all recent publications.

And first, of the *Deist*. This is a weekly periodical, started with the expressed intention of expounding philosophical views which have a direct bearing upon the creeds and interests of man—promoting what it conceives to be rationalism, and subverting priestcraft, and dealing out blows equally against the Atheist on the one hand, and the superstitious on the other. The *Deist* thus sets out,

"What with the wild extravagances of superstition on the one hand, and the equally wild extravagances of atheism on the other—it would appear that all the rational, mind-elevating, heart-cheering, and virtue-sustaining principles of natural theology are in danger of being torn to pieces between the two contending factions. The Deists of Great Britain—a numerous, intelligent, and respectable body—cannot sympathise with either

faction. The mind-less, mind-destroying dogmas of the priest, and the heartless, withering dogmas of the Atheist, are almost equally abhorrent to their feelings."

We have here, "wild extravagances of atheism"—"rational, mind-elevating, heart-cheering, and virtue-sustaining principles of natural theology"—atheism one of "two contending factions"—a rather summary process with a point in dispute, and no very ceremonious dealing with atheism, before its merits are discussed—first determined as wild, extravagant, and factious, and afterwards reasoned on. We have too, as I opine, no little "wildness" and "extravagance" in the laboured eulogium upon what is termed "natural theology." "Rational, mind-elevating, heart-cheering, & virtue-sustaining," is a pretty fair catalogue. Now I think, at this stage, a dissection of this very prominent and important term will be quite in place. The association of the words "natural" and "theology," has, I know, been sanctioned by great names, my Lord Brougham among the number—and so has every great absurdity. Divines of the philosophical school, and philosophers of the divine school, are great favourers of this so-called science—it bewilders, perplexes, mystifies, and its propounders are looked up to and admired, as men of profound acquirements, and withal eminent piety. Piety does wonders, for purses and piety go together in most cordial confederacy, as the writers of the theo-philosophical or philosophico-theistical tracts, called the Bridgwater Treatises, so munificently paid for, can feelingly attest. Now what is theological?—that which belongs to the study of god or gods. A god or gods is obviously above or beyond nature. When ever you discuss or consider the subject of god, you depart from nature's realms. Gods are above and beyond, separate and dissociated from natural things, beings, qualities, or conditions—or, they are part and parcel of these things. If the former, we have quite a distinct view to take of them from all that belongs to physical phenomena or moral faculties, and quite consistently invent a series of terms specially suited for such speculations, and totally inapplicable, transcendently beyond, and absolutely distinct from natural things, beings, and matters. Thus have arisen the terms "inspiration," "revelation," "miraculous interposition," "gifts," "prophecy," "calls," and multitudes of other words, coined for the express purpose of supernaturalism, or preternaturalism, and appropriate to no other. The leading, chief, and radical term of all, is *god*. Theology, then, or the study of god or divine things, is very properly termed, by its most devoted adherents, as the study of that which is incomprehensible, inexplicable, "past finding out."

Naturalism, or physics, or materialism, is investigable, more or less comprehensible, explicable, and capable of being found out. Herein lies the gist of the difference, and I consider I am, after this dissection, entitled to affirm, at the outset, that the two terms natural and theology are irreconcilable. If, on the other hand, we consider god or gods as part and parcel of the things, beings, qualities, or faculties we call natural, or physical, or material, they are then robbed of the peculiar characteristics which constitute their essence, whereby we distinguish them from all other things. We, in this view, necessarily cease to consider god or gods as originating, governing, controlling, superintending, "binding," inspiring, "revealing," miraculising, granting "gifts," &c.—then what becomes of them? What is the meaning or value of the term? What will there then be left as constituents of the god-idea, except what we find in the usual cognizable operations of nature—as motion, heat, light, electricity, irritability, sensation, consciousness, feeling, and thought? Let the Deist or Theist, then, declare himself as the believer in a being or a something readily distinguishable from the ordinary or extraordinary phenomena of nature, or give up his deism or theism. I again repeat—naturalism and theologism are irreconcilable terms. Choose your position, and I can grapple with you. But no half-way houses between heaven and earth, in which you can play at hide and seek with god and nature.

As an illustration of the absurdities into which the admission of the god-belief plunges us, the "Theophilanthropists," or lovers of god and man, are not the least remarkable. These quasi philosophical goddists, professing to be quite free from dogmatical assumption, and setting their faces against the ceremonial observances of the christians, as well as the priestly domination inseparable from that faith, yet had their worship, and their temple, and their ceremonies.

Paine had made the notable discovery—see his address to the society of Theophilanthropists—that there were two somethings beside nature. His expression is, "God is the power, or first cause—nature is the law—and matter is the subject acted upon." Here we have a power, a law, and a subject—it does not profess to be a miraculous trinity, in which three is one—we must, therefore, conclude the three to be really and *bona fide* three. It would follow, that nature, which mere philosophers, not goddists, would call all, is but one of three, and that the second in the enumeration. And Paine, so able as a political reasoner, so formidable as a biblical adversary, becomes a driveller when riding the hobby of the god-notion.

The Theophilanthropists, among whom Paine was a leading man, instituted what

they called "religious and moral *festivals*"—and had their days of *worship*, "on days corresponding to Sundays." It may be supposed that the modicums of humanity that went up to sing or say praises, would scorn to stoop to the designation of the third denomination, namely, "matter," still less would they aspire to the first, and proclaim themselves *gods* (for the "Pantheistical" did not happen then to be the fashionable-philosophical phase of the god-idea)—it would follow then, that of the three grand parts into which these philosophical Deists arbitrarily divided the universe, the second part, or a portion of it, volunteered to worship the first part, and treated with utter contempt the third part—for what reason we are kept in utter ignorance. The "lovers of god and man" have not condescended to inform us why the "power" or "first cause," should monopolise all the honour and glory—why the law or nature department, or that section of it called animals, or rather that sub-section called men and women, should bow down and worship in vile and humiliating prostration, a power, because it happens to be, or they think it happens to be a great power, or a cause, because they think it a first cause—and which power or first cause could, after all, have done nothing without the material or stuff, matter, and the tools or the plan of operations, nature. What monstrous stuff—paralleled only by the monstrous stuff of the Jew, christian, and all other sacred rubbish—do these god speculators put forth. The god-idea, in fact, appears in all its modes, stages, manifestations, and ramifications to be quite inseparable from absurdity, usurpation, or waste of energy. The "rational, mind-elevating, heart-cheering, and virtue-sustaining principles of natural theology," thus vanish into less than celestial attenuation, become less real than the end of a bottomless pit, less substantial than what Jesus took from "him who had nothing," and less palpable than the ghost of a Deist, the "back parts" of a Jew god, a "spiritual comforter," or a philosophical nonentity. M.Q.R.

P.S. As the tender susceptibilities of some of your theo-philosophical readers are so great, that a tomahawk stroke quite "flabbergasts" them, I will, with your permission, dear P., again apply the critical scalpel to the same "subjects" next week.

SUBSCRIPTIONS,

For the Anti-Persecution Union.

Collector 26	£0	2	4
" 74	0	3	6
Mr. Miller, Gallashiels.. .. .	0	2	0
Free Inquirers of Brighton.. .. .	0	13	0
London. M. RYALL, Sec.			

Received £1. for Mrs. Holyoake, per Mr. Henry Hartsburgh, from the Members of the Society for the Suppression of Superstition.

THE RELEASE OF C. SOUTHWELL FROM BRISTOL GAOL.

At a general meeting of the shareholders at John-street Institution, on Sunday evening, January 29, 1843, the proceedings of the committee *pro tem.* were confirmed, and all their conduct unanimously agreed to—and it was carried unanimously that they be all confirmed in their offices till the plan for which they are connected shall have been fully carried out. It was also resolved, that the shareholders who had not paid up in full, should have time to do so, till Monday February 6, 1843, and if not paid up by that time, their shares would be forfeited. £22 were taken on the occasion, in shares, which makes upwards of £130 in the hands of the treasurer. Our old friend, Mr. Hetherington, was in the chair, and everything went off with the greatest satisfaction. Further notice will soon be given, and the success we have met with (which is beyond the committee's most sanguine expectations) lead us to the conclusion that the shareholders, and the public at large, will give Mr. Southwell a hearty reception, by an overflowing audience, on the evening he makes his appearance among them.

PROSPECTUS for raising one hundred and forty pounds, in shares of one pound each.

That, in order to ensure the return of the capital to the shareholders, a commodious theatre shall be taken for a public dramatic performance, in which Mr. C. Southwell shall take the principle character,

That, should not all the shares be taken up, in order to carry out the plan, those friends who have advanced their money shall have it returned without any deduction.

That the proceeds of the performance shall be divided among the shareholders.

That a deposit of not less than two shillings shall be paid on each share; the same will be forfeited unless completed by Monday, the 6th of February, 1843.

That shares may be obtained in the Coffee Room as the Social Institution, John-street, Tottenham Court Road, every evening in the week, between the hours of eight and nine, or through the medium of the secretaries at the different social institutions.

WILLIAM SOUTHWELL, Treasurer.

R. REDBURN, General Secretary.

N. B. The secretaries of the different branches, and all friends who may feel disposed to release Mr. Southwell from his cruel imprisonment, may obtain shares by transmitting a post-office order to the General Secretary, John-street Institution.

The Committee for conducting the fund for the Release of C. Southwell, have to acknowledge the receipt of 15s. 6d., as a donation, from a few Carpenters at Bristol, with thanks for the same—and trust so good an example will be followed by many parties in town and country.—R. Redburn, Sec.

In type, and shall appear in our next, "The Philanthropic Society and the *Oracle of Reason*," and "How religion should be attacked," by Omnipax. Received "Satan," and "More Bruce Law and Jardine Justice."

Printed and Published by THOMAS PATERSON, No. 46, Wych-street, Strand, London, to whom all Communications should be addressed.

Saturday, February 4, 1843.

THE ORACLE OF REASON: Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE"

EDITED BY THOMAS PATERSON.

No. 61.] Originally Edited by CHARLES SOUTHWELL, sentenced, on January 15, 1842,
to Twelve Months' Imprisonment in Bristol Gaol, and to pay a fine of £100, [PRICE 1D.
for Blasphemy, contained in No. 4.
Second Editor, G. J. HOLYOAKE, sentenced, on August 15, 1842, to Six Months'
Imprisonment in Gloucester Gaol, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.

MATERIALISM.

THAT nature is not a phantom, that there are such things as men, plants, moons, &c., materialists take the liberty to lay down as a self-evident fact—any attempt to establish what is self-evident, would, of course, be waste of ink and patience. Those who are not convinced there is a sun, when it stares them full in the face, and use their tongues to deny they have tongues—are either sophistical or foolish. If men may be said instinctively to know anything, it is their own existence, and the existence of a thing or things external to themselves, called sometimes *nature*, sometimes *world*, sometimes *universe*. *Nature* being, at least, as good a term as any other, I shall, with a view to simplicity, use that, and that only, as expressive of *the whole*, or thing, not ourselves. Here it is necessary to add, that nature stands for the whole—matter for parts of the whole. Thus our planet is a nearly spherical globe of matter, but a part of nature, and that too, inconceivably small, when considered relatively even to the mere speck of existence our telescopes discover to us. I am thus precise, to hinder misconceptions, *if possible*, experience having taught me the full value of Lord Bacon's remark—that "men believe their reason governs their words, but it often happens that words have power enough to react upon reason."

The existence of matter, is a fact or a fiction. Spiritualists deny its existence. They affect to think everything nothing—that we only fancy we have bodies—only fancy there are such places as England, Greece, or Russia—only fancy there are heavens above, earth beneath, and waters under the earth—in short, only fancy everything but fancy—for, according to these spiritualists, an imaginary or fanciful existence is the only real existence.

No more words need be wasted upon such worse than dreamery, so I will come at once to the wide-awake philosophy of materialism, which rests upon the obvious truth—that matter exists, that it exists necessarily, and therefore is self-evident—that its nature

is to think, attract, repel, &c., under certain circumstances, as its nature is *not* to think, *not* to attract, or *not* to repel under other circumstances—that relatively to us it is incessantly in motion, therefore we conclude motion is natural to it, or, as others have expressed the same idea, that *it moves of necessity*. Maggots, which may be seen in decayed cheese by the million, are no more a consequence of matter's motion than men are. No more, I say, for men and maggots have the same origin. All spring from dirt, and all return to dirt. There are many people who will not hesitate to allow that matter in motion produces insects and reptiles, yet cannot stomach the obvious inference that another kind or other kinds of material motion can produce human beings. To hear some folks talk, one would be apt to think they had some *super*, *sub*, or *unnatural* sources of information, seeing how obstinately they prefer their own *theory* to the *practice of nature*. The notable fools to whom I allude, talk as flippantly about the impossibility of matter's doing this or that, as though matter's inherent energies and capacity to effect, can be measured by our puny intellects. Let us first learn what matter *can* do, before we pretend to determine what it *cannot* do, said Dr. Engledeue. A stinging rap on the knuckles that, which, it is to be hoped, will teach spirit-do-everything, and matter-do-nothing simpletons better manners.

As the non-existence or absence of matter is inconceivable, reason must reject any such hypothesis—for reason cannot admit what even imagination cannot compass. Reason can only legitimately allow what it comprehends—but nothing is less than a shadow, that neither reason nor fancy can lay hold of. Materialism, appealing to no other than reasonable principles, of course dismisses with contempt the notion of an absolute creation, i.e. production of everything from nothing. It is because creation has been taught as an undoubted fact, that men have found it necessary to imagine a god or creator. If matter was created, of course somebody must have created it—but never IF had more virtue in it than this.

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"All," said D'Holbach,* "who are not enslaved by prejudice, must agree to the position, that *nothing can come of nothing*. Many theologians (continues the same writer) have acknowledged nature to be an active whole." Almost all the ancient philosophers were agreed to regard the world as eternal. Ocellus Lucanus, speaking of the universe, says, "it always has been, and it always will be." Vatable and Grotius assure us, that to render the Hebrew phrase in the first chapter of Genesis correctly, we must say, *when god made heaven and earth, matter was without form*—if this be true, and every Hebraist can judge for himself, then the word which has been rendered *created*, means only to fashion, form, arrange. We know that the Greek words *create* and *formed*, have always indicated the same thing. According to St. Jerome, *creare* has the same meaning as *condere*, to found, to build. The bible does not anywhere say, in a clear manner, that the world was made of nothing. Tertullian and the father Petau both admit, that *this* is a truth established more by *reasoning* than by *authority*. St. Justin seems to have contemplated matter as eternal, since he commends Plato for having said, that "god, in the creation of the world, only gave impulse to matter and fashioned it." Burnet and Pythagoras were entirely of this opinion, and even our church service may be adduced in support—for though it admits, by implication, a beginning, it expressly denies an end—"As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end." It is easy to perceive that that which cannot cease to exist, must have always been.

Here we have it, on undoubted authority, that the notion, universal among modern christians, of a spirit-god, who, about six thousand years ago, called into existence a matter universe, originated in the mistranslation of a Hebrew phrase, which, instead of being rendered as we find it in Genesis, "In the beginning god created the heaven and the earth; and the earth was without form," &c., should have been rendered, "When god made heaven and earth, matter was without form," &c. Oh, what ignoramuses are our priests, and worse than ignoramuses those who are cajoled by them. Even the learned Montesquieu tells us, in "The Spirit of Laws," "God is related to the universe as creator and preserver, the laws by which he created all things, are those by which he preserves them. He acts according to these rules, because he knows them—he knows them, because he made them—and he made them, because they are relative to his wisdom and power." Now, if reason and experience know nothing of a

god related to the universe as creator, i.e. conjuror of everything out of nothing, the above paragraph is very silly—hypothesis heaped upon hypothesis—hypothesis, too, that even imagination, in its most exalted flights, may be safely defied to reach. But Montesquieu, unfortunately, is not the only great man who befooled himself and his readers with god nonsense. Philosophers in general, and modern philosophers in particular, seemed to have considered that when writing on theological subjects, they had a *carte blanche*, upon which they were at liberty to set down the most monstrous fooleries. Let any one study attentively the works of leading philosophers who have flourished in Europe, since the revival of learning, and my head to an apple, he will allow that these strictures are neither harsh nor undeserved.

I think it has been shown by reasoning and by authority, that christians have no warrant in Genesis, for the un-supposable supposition of a "god related to the universe as CREATOR"—so that, allowing the inspiration of Moses, he cannot be cited as authority that nature had a beginning—and we know the study of nature leads to no such conclusion. On the contrary, all analogy seems to indicate that matter could not have begun to be. The eternity of *matter* is the fundamental axiom of materialism—the eternity of *spirit* is the fundamental axiom of spiritualism. Materialism has uncreated *something*, and spiritualism uncreated *nothing*, for basis.

THE "PHILALETHEAN SOCIETY"
AND THE
"ORACLE OF REASON."

1, London-street, Edinburgh,
25th January, 1843.

SIR.—At a late meeting of the board of management of the "Philalethean Society for peaceably Suppressing Infidelity," several Nos. of the *Oracle of Reason*, of which you are the present editor and publisher, were brought under their consideration. In particular, it was submitted to their notice, that in the article "Is there a god," in No. 2 of that publication, it is affirmed that the "improbability" of god's existence can be demonstrated," and that all *a priori* demonstrations of the being of a god, proceed upon the assumption of a divine revelation, and therefore beg the question—and that, in the continuation of the same article in No. 3, it is said, "what is technically called the *a priori* argument in favour of a god," "was proved (in No. 2) to have no other source than *assumed revelation*,"—and farther, that many statements, to a similar effect, are to be found in the succeeding numbers of the *Oracle*.

* System of Nature, p. 28.

The board of management of the Philalethean society, being satisfied that the argument *a priori* is not so easily disposed of, and that the statements regarding it in the *Oracle of Reason* are entire misrepresentations, have directed me to transmit to you the accompanying copy of the work entitled "An Argument *a priori* for the Being and Attributes of God," by Mr. Gillespie of our society, and to challenge you, or any one connected with the *Oracle of Reason*, either to answer that argument, or to show that in any part of it there is a substantial fallacy.

As before mentioned, it is averred in your publication, that the *improbability* of the existence of a god can be demonstrated—Mr. Gillespie's work undertakes to prove, not the *improbability* but the *impossibility* of his non-existence. I beg that you will observe that the work in question professes to be a strict logical *demonstration*, and must be met by pure ratiocination, and not by anything in the shape of mere declamation, or appeals to the feelings or passions.

I shall expect that, in common fairness, you will acknowledge the receipt of this challenge in the *Oracle of Reason*, so that the readers of your publication may know there is at least one society not afraid to meet you with only the weapons of pure reason, undertaking as we do to disprove the fundamental position of your periodical, "There is no god."

It may be proper to mention, before concluding, that the champion of the Scottish Atheists, who styled himself Antitheos, attempted to refute the "Argument *a priori*." An examination, published by Mr. Gillespie, of Antitheos' work, made it plain that the atheistical objections contained therein were altogether unsound—and even Antitheos himself admitted that his pretended refutation would require very considerable alterations.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

CHARLES CLARK,

Vice-president of the Philalethean Society.

To Mr. Thomas Paterson,

Or the Editors or Conductors, for the time, of the *Oracle of Reason*.

THE above communication reached the office of the *Oracle* at a time when Paterson's "unavoidable absence" was occasioned by a visit from the Bow-street god-defenders, in the shape of a hulking policeman. A very anti-philalethean way, I guess, of settling a disputed speculative question. Not knowing, at the moment of writing, the issue of the affair, or to what personal inconvenience the christian—as-by-law-established-magistrates may contrive to put upon Paterson, I will, in the event of his absence, most willingly enter the list with the champion of

the truth-lovers—of course provided Southwell and Holyoake, who will shortly be relieved from the tender embrace of Bristol and Cheltenham goddists, will not feel disposed to claim their acknowledged priority of title to the picking up of the theological gauntlet.

I have written to the president to inquire if permission will be granted to print the "Being and Attributes of God" entire in the *Oracle*, in order that the subject may be treated fully and fairly, and that no colour may be given to the accusation of garbling.

M. Q. R.

MORE BRUCE-LAW & JARDINE-JUSTICE.

ANOTHER instance of Bruce-law was given at Bow-street, on Friday, during Paterson's examination. In the delivery, by Paterson, of his defence, which he had taken the trouble of transcribing, Mr. Jardine determines that what he states has nothing to do with the case, and orders (Bruce fashion) that the papers be taken from him. Was ever such a case heard of before? A robbery committed in a police court, and by order of a justass—and that robbery committed too in order to prevent an accused person from making a defence! Had such an occurrence taken place under any other circumstances than that of alleged profanity, the whole press would have deemed the case so flagrant as to make it the imperative duty of the secretary of state to dismiss from the bench a magistrate, whose prejudices were so strong as to prevent an accused person making a defence. Public meetings would have been got up in every part of the country, and there would have been such a hubbub that the secretary of state would have had no rest till he had dismissed him.

Jardine and his gang did not attempt to take Mr. Thomas's brief from him, and tell him that it had nothing to do with the case. Oh no, but, say they, let Mr. Thomas's back be turned, and then we'll show them what we'll do—the accused is unused to speech-making, we'll take away his papers, and then he will not be able to make any defence, so we shall easily get rid of the case.

Now it appears that Paterson was aware, as everyone must be, who had witnessed or noticed the previous conduct of the magistrates in this case, that they were determined, if possible, to convict, so he had prepared his defence, not so much with the view of producing conviction in *their* minds, as to show them up in their true colours before the public. But they, good honest folks, were determined, as far as they were concerned, to prevent it, and "liking darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil," they forcibly took possession of Paterson's defence—thinking, no doubt, that then the

public would be precluded from receiving the benefit of his ideas—but in this I am glad to find they are wofully mistaken, as I understand his friends are making arrangements for the immediate publication of both what he did say, and what he would have said, if allowed.

Perhaps another reason for Jardine & Co.'s desire to dispatch business, was their wanting their dinners, which with Englishmen generally, and justasses in particular, is a very potent one—if it was so, I would advise them to bring Paterson's case on as early as possible on Tuesday, so that, in their own phraseology, they may not have another such sin to lay to their consciences, though their consciences appear to be pretty accommodating.

A LOOKER-ON.

HOW RELIGION SHOULD BE ATTACKED.

I HAVE not penned these remarks as the dictatorial emanation of a saint to sinners, but, as what to me appears just; though I am afraid, I am not, myself, able to carry it into practice, much as I wish to do so.

It seems, then, to me, that the displays which were made lately in Holywell-street, and which led to such violent consequences, were not conducive to the cause of infidelity; and were, therefore, an unnecessary hurting of the feelings of a large class of persons—for which we cannot offer anything in extenuation—except, that we were doing as we have been done by. This retaliative argument is generally open to this objection—that we can seldom tell who was the first aggressor. But, setting this aside, we, who profess to be guided by reason—cool, calm, and deliberative reason—ought not to imitate the conduct of those who confessedly make reason tributary to their feelings—they have an excuse, to which we cannot lay claim.

That the displays did not tend to increase infidelity, must appear certain to all who give it a minute's serious consideration. There was not anything in what was displayed that could, at once, overthrow a person's religion. They certainly were never expected to operate farther than to draw attention to the subject, and set the readers thinking upon it. But, if the reader or gazer were a christian, his breast must have been filled with wounded pride and indignation. A frame of mind, not very likely to originate or entertain the question of the possibility or probability of his religious notions being destitute of a foundation in truth. If the reader were either a confirmed or threshold Infidel, *his* attention had been already attracted to the subject. So, the utmost good that can be claimed is, that the attention of the latter classes was called to the **SHOP**. The which, I think,

might have been equally well done, without injury to the feelings of the religious folks. But these last-named should bear in mind, that our offensive conduct is the result of *their* formation of *our* characters through *their* examples—and, therefore, instead of calling upon the strong arm of the law to avenge their wounded feelings, they should set us good examples, and wait patiently for the fruits thereof. But, as there is little chance of their taking this course, let us put them to shame by adopting the principle:—that no one has a right, though he may have the power to do so with impunity, to unnecessarily or thoughtlessly hurt the feelings of another. He who commits a breach of this principle, in the hundred other affairs of every-day life, is discarded by society. Why should religion form an exception? that subject upon which, of all others, people feel most keenly. Let us follow out this principle in practice, and we may then, with some grace, demand the right of uncontrolled freedom of discussion—the which, I submit, we cannot very well do, while we show the offensive use we should make of it, had we it in our possession. I do not pretend that a definite line can be drawn upon this subject. Some persons feelings are so morbidly sensitive, that to attempt to suit ourselves to them, is quite out of the question. A broad demarcation *must* be allowed, but that, I think, has been widely overstepped lately.

I am as fully alive, as is the author of the "Great Dragon," to the value of ridicule; but it should be remembered, that "Satire (in order to be efficacious) should, like a polished razor keen, cut with a wound that's neither felt nor seen."

Let us recollect how much freedom of discussion we have at present, compared with what we had a few years ago. What a change we have produced in this respect, in the public mind. And from thence, what ought we not to anticipate in a few years, provided we do not bring about, by our mistaken endeavours and uncontrolled feelings, "a re-action in favour of superstition and priestcraft."

OMNIPAX.

GOD *versus* PATERSON.

THE EXTRAORDINARY PROFANE CASE.

Just Published,

A full and correct Report, taken expressly in shorthand notes, with all the suppressed passages, of the recent unprecedented Bow-street proceedings, at the instance of government, against "THE MAN PATERSON," late of Holywell-street, now of 46, WYCH-STREET, Strand, and TOTHILL-FIELDS, Westminster, for the alleged publication of PRO-FANE PAPERS.

London:—Office of the *Oracle of Reason*, 46, Wych-street, and all Booksellers and Newsvenders.

N.B. *The Profits of the Sale to be given to the fund of the "Anti-Persecution Union."*

GOD CHECKMATED BY THE DEVIL.

THE only intelligence we hear of god, is of his misfortunes. Like other kings, he issues a flaming bulletin when he is defeated, or near coming to his end. These heavenly documents, compared with those on earth, resemble most the Chinese—want of ammunition or power, makes the *victorious* party cease from killing, the devil, or the English, as the case may be. The powers above have always assisted the Chinese, according to their own account—and god, though ever beaten, always tells us he has triumphed. When all proceeded peaceably in heaven, we never heard of or were troubled with god—he reigned in peace, not caring a rush about us. An infinity of territory—the universal population—omnipresence—omnipotence—were all his—when, one fine morning, the devil took more than half his territory, more than half of his subjects, and robbed him of all his attributes. Ever since god has been swearing to us that he still possesses the same attributes and powers as formerly, although the devil is hourly depriving him of everything he calls his own. He declares that we all belonged to him, only the devil stole us. A very pretty quarrel it is, as it stands between them. The best is, we never see either of these two chaps, though they both bid for our favour, and interest a great number of people in their game. The fellow who says he is worst treated, by turns appeals to our compassion, or tries to frighten us with what he will do, and generally sends some ignoramus to tell us how he is getting on. These messengers never say they saw him, but that what they know came into their heads miraculously—Moses did say, it is true, that he saw his back parts. One account says he came into the world *incog.*, and so well fulfilled his intentions that no one heard of him until he was gone. But this account differs, as to whether it was himself or his son. It was known directly he was dead, we are told, that he was god, and it was recollected that he promised to come again shortly in better plight, but he has never been heard of since.

The devil, even by the account of his enemies, seems a most active fellow, and is continually walking, roaring, and seeking about. If all be not a midsummer night's dream, we must say that god has to thank himself—it is his own incorrigible laziness that has put him at a growing discount with all men of sense and business, and made him the laughing-stock of the world. Men have tried to help him, but if he won't help himself, like Esop's wagoner, he must really go to the devil, as it is said, along with all the rest. In our zeal for god we have acted very unfairly by the devil—for when god is not to

be found, a common occurrence, we are sure to meet with his adversary. The pious, bible-smiting Watts has immortalised this fact in his well-known "Busy Bee" poem—

The devil always finds some work
For idle hands to do,

which I consider a favorable trait in his character, but one that would appear to have been overlooked by the Anti-Corn-Law-League, who are advised to "go to the devil" forthwith. Men have burnt thousands at the stake—massacred millions—because the devil had got into them, and filled them with heresy of some sort or the other, and made them rebels to the god whose part we took. We have ceased to inflict capital punishment for heresy, we have ceased to punish for witchcraft, and we shall soon cease to try for blasphemy—if god does not show himself worthy of the interest we have taken in his concerns. We must sum up impartially the whole cause, and leave it for the jury of mankind to decide, whether they will interfere any longer in this endless litigation.

To show our fairness, we will take only god's account of the transactions between him and the devil. When god was discomfited by the devil, he made this world, to serve as a sort of workshop for the manufactory of angels, to fill the gap in the upper regions. No sooner, however, were the first pair made, and nature all attention to the issue, than the devil won them, and all their posterity—in whose possession they have remained ever since. All the world was set at loggerheads, and god retired to consider another move. Meantime, the devil was at work to make things worse—and god was obliged to soak the world like a sponge, and drown all, with the exception of seven, whom he saved to begin the game with again. The descendants of these seven the devil coolly bagged, and god finding himself quite unable to govern the whole, said, I only want a few, I will have one people to myself. These chosen people gave him as much trouble or more, than all the world. They never would obey him, or else they could not make out what he meant, and the devil was always at their elbows. The consequence was, they fared much worse than any other people. God was always punishing them for their mistakes—like a brute beast which has a ferocious master, whatever the rider took into his head, and the beast did not intuitively follow, showers of blows, right and left, were the portion of his servitude. Over and over again god said to the devil, they are yours, and vented his wrath upon them for his own want of adroitness. At last he said, I will stake all, I will stake my own son, myself, and the holy-ghost, into the bargain. Done, said the devil, and down came the son.

The devil, like an experienced gambler,

at first let him gain a few trifling moves—such as tempting him to sell himself, which the devil well knew he would reject, and not fail to boast of it to his father, and, also, here and there, out of some thousands possessed of devils, he allowed him to remove a few, and transport them into other animals—in fact, the devil allowed him to do what he could himself do just as well, if not better, for he had had all the magical and supernatural business in his hands from the beginning of time. This was so well known, that those who saw Jesus make the moves declared the devil did it. You may say that of me, he said, but if you say it of my friend the holy-ghost, “you’ll get a hell of a lickin’.” Neither father, son, nor holy-ghost knew exactly what they would be at, for after the old gentleman, head of the firm, had sworn to the Jews that they should be his people, he allows his son to select a few out of all the world, whom he adopts, and discards his previous pets. Thus were the Jews, without warning, and whilst paying their accustomed tribute and homage to god, made over to the devil—a shabby trick, which they resented, by nailing the cause of it to a cross, “like a dead rat upon a barn door.” The son swore the father had betrayed him, and it certainly looked very much like it. When Jesus said, “Why hast thou forsaken me?” it was apparent the devil had won the game—he had checkmated god in his last and grand move, and henceforward the world, and all that therein is, belongs to the conqueror.

W. B.

To the Editor of the Oracle of Reason.

Pandemonium, January 8, 1843.

MR. EDITOR.—Perceiving that you have commenced a new volume, I take the liberty of correcting an error into which you fell in an early number of your last—and also of offering a few remarks on myself, which I think calculated to interest your readers.

The error I allude to is this—Mr. Southwell said, that did not priests tell us that that concentration of abominations, the Jew-book, was written by a god, we should rather suppose it to be the outpourings of some devil. Now, I beg to say, that no devil in my dominions would write such drivelling nonsense—and I am inclined to query the data on which the assertion was ventured. As that paragraph is making some noise in the world, the error, or rather libel, is of importance to me. Although I have no connection with the “shop above,” there are no trade antipathies between us. I have been misrepresented by both laws and gospels. Milton was the first brave old fellow who, in modern times, said a word in my favour, and did my sentiments any justice. He would have done more had times and

saints permitted. My leaving heaven differed from his representations, and was on this wise. Spirits, as well as men, are allured by the agreeable. Old Homer knew this, when he painted Jupiter in love with Juno. An affair of this kind placed me in the power of the Major Domo of the skies—but there was none of that ignoble strife St. James insinuates, and Milton describes. The major took me, as Corporal Trim took the fly, and opening the “window of heaven,” as Trim opened that of uncle Toby, he said, with that generous pathos in which the corporal addressed the fly which had stung him, “Go, poor devil, why should I hurt thee? The universe is wide enough for thee and me.” You must feel that this conduct is more noble than the version of it given by the orthodox, and, if men will craze themselves with deities, it is better that they dwell upon the agreeable than the disgusting. It is only malignant imbecility that pictures the gods savagely delighting in fire, brimstone, and blood.

Do not suppose that I take part in the miserable rage christians exhibit towards you. If angels weep over human folly, devils weep over human malice. I did not animate that pious ruffian, Bruce, to break your windows, nor breathe in the injustice of Jardine. I despise such wretched instruments—policemen are not my vicegerents—I never defend my cause in a manner so cowardly. You never knew me indict for blasphemy, and yet no one has been more abused. I answer calumnies by what Hugh Stowell calls the logic of life—I live them down—a practice good for mortals as well as devils. Did such poltroons as defend god, attempt to defend me, I would kick the imbeciles out of the universe. I have not a tribe of miseries below, as is represented, but a glorious band of fellows, of whom the “world was not worthy”—men whom christianity never did manufacture, and never could. Bentham is now at my elbow, begging me to remind you, to “maximize morals and minimize religion.” By the by, religion down here is despised as the art by which men neglect their own interests, and torment the deities.

I am very busy at this moment, as the young Jews born on new year’s day are being circumcised—so I shall just express a hope that you insert this, and just give you a hint, that if christians are correct about your future locality, it may be your interest to oblige me, and do me justice in diffusing a more liberal notion of my character.

Lucifer, who drops this in your box, will look for its appearance in an early number. He is engaged in your neighbourhood, endeavouring to get among the unemployed—a distribution of loaves instead of bibles. I ought to say that I should have written ear-

lier, but a rather heavy fog in this quarter, prevented me getting into the new year.

Yours, etc. SATAN.

[The editor begs to say, that the above is willingly inserted, but wishes, in any future communication, that the writer will either use white paper, or white ink. All black does not suit mundane optics. The postscript, in consequence, is partly illegible. The following is all that can be read.]

P.S. Mind, I do not put this letter in as evidence of my existence, or of the existence of any one to whom I have referred, divine revelation is an unfounded and dangerous pretence. The deities will acknowledge none, not made by human reason. The deities want not the importunity of human homage any more than you want the homage of oysters. Duties, like the spheres of nature, are limited and distinct, and *obligations extend only to kind*. The ocean is the shell-fish's domain—the universe is man's—all beyond is claimed by the gods. You can consider this letter a communication from a friend, who is as much acquainted with infernal matters, as *any body else*.

HINDOO ATTACKS ON CHRISTIANITY.

I LATELY sent you a letter on the propagation, not of the faith, but of infidelity in India, when I proposed some association to co-operate in the work so favourably begun, I did not speak profanely but prophetically, as, at the very time, a den of blasphemy, similar to No. 8, Holywell-street, was opened in Madras. W.B.

The *Athenaeum* publishes the following statement of facts, confirmed by the representations of heathen as well as christian natives:—

“Several Hindus have organised a system of offensive operations against christianity, and a house has been rented in Salay-street, in Black Town, which is opened every Friday evening for as many as choose to attend. When thus assembled, a person, formerly connected with the American mission, mounts the rostrum, and with a copy of the Tamil scriptures in his hand, holds forth to his admiring auditory, using his best invention to turn into ridicule what he reads. The service is represented as a close imitation of those performed among native christians, singing and praying making a part of it. The conduct of this man is spoken of as that of a buffoon, turning into ribald jests the most serious and solemn subjects. The statement goes even further than this, and asserts it to be ‘rather that of a demon than a human being, consisting of the most dreadful blasphemies against the most high, and

of the most blood-thirsty petitions addressed to the idols of the country for the destruction of all christian missionaries, and the recovery of all the native christians to the superstitions of their forefathers.’ These infamous proceedings are carried on week after week, in the neighbourhood to which we have alluded, and are encouraged by some leading men among the Hindus, whose names are mentioned; but, from motives which we trust they will appreciate, we withhold them for the present from the public. The line of conduct they are pursuing is emphatically discreditable to them in the highest degree, for they not only give their attendance at the meeting, but, by pecuniary offerings to the exhibitor, pave the way to its permanence. One of them expressed his approbation and delight, by making him a present of Rs. 50.”

The *Spectator* says, “As there are many members of the native community who deservedly stand high in European estimation, we have been called upon, in justice to them, to affix the stigma of these proceedings upon the actual parties, nor do we feel that any scruple or delicacy is due towards them. We are informed that Strenavassa Pillay and Soolachennum Moodelly are among the principal abettors of the indecent mummeries by which it is vainly attempted to insult and profane the christian religion. It is not without regret that we name the latter, especially as he has given proofs of public spirit and liberality of feeling which have been recorded with a full measure of approbation in our columns. Whether government may choose to visit its displeasure upon this individual, who, as holding an appointment under the revenue board, is immediately under its influence, we do not pretend to determine; that the former may be rendered ineligible as a justice of the peace, from the refusal of his christian colleagues to be conjoined with him in the office, is, we think, by no means improbable.”

At a meeting of the justices in session, on the 10th November, a resolution was adopted to call upon Strenavassa Pillay for an explanation of his connection with the Salay-street blasphemies, and in the event of such not being satisfactory, to make a formal representation of the matter to government.

This gentleman has accordingly written a letter, stating that he “neither directly nor indirectly aided or abetted the disgraceful proceedings” alluded to. He says, “It is true that I have accidentally, and out of curiosity, as any one else would have done, stopped at and entered the place in Salay-street, where a native was delivering certain lectures on points of the Hindu religion, without, so far as I heard, making any insulting allusion to the christian religion, and

which I entirely disapprove of." This explanation appears to have been thought satisfactory.

The *Athenaeum*, November 12, publishes the prospectus put forth and circulated amongst the natives when the meeting was established. "Whatever doubts may have been entertained as to the real intentions of the Hindu meeting in Salay-street," observes the editor, "they are at once removed by the prospectus (a translation of which is now before us) that was originally put forth and circulated among the natives when the meeting was established. The object is no longer left to conjecture, and the announcements contained therein clearly exhibit a coalition for purposes that must, in the end, overwhelm the parties concerned in shame and confusion. The display of malignant feeling pervading this outburst of ignorance and fanaticism, ought not to surprise any one; for minds of the cast of those who concocted the production are equal to nothing but what is low, base, and degrading. The manner in which christians are spoken of, and the great founder of christianity derided, indicates a fearful amount of depravity and blasphemy." He then gives the following extract:—

These mletchas or infidels, who worship an impostor that rode on an ass, who suffered death upon the cross and was buried, have come to India and have established missions of different names, such as the American, the Baptist, the London, the Wesleyan, and the church missions. Thinking to teach the low caste people with the high caste indiscriminately, they have opened schools in almost all towns, and tempt and compel children of high caste to attend the schools, and thus corrupt their young minds with all kinds of insinuations. The vulgar, beast-like Padres, thus have jumped near our field, with their up-lifted horns (meaning tracts), such as the Imperfect Blind-Way, the insults against the three gods, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, and are ruining our plants, the children. Thus, within the last forty years, the Padres seized and teased 700,000 souls of our community, plunged them into the illegal pit of their religion and disfigured their faces (by not allowing them to use any mark on their foreheads). Securing them thus in the desert of thick darkness, called blameful Protestantism, they turn upon us with all their insinuation to deceive us and our children. To encounter their attempts in this, as well as to oblige them to run back to their own country, without a remnant to be seen here, we took up our mighty bow of discussion, and shooting at them with the arrows of different kinds (meaning tracts), such as 'A Check to the christian religion,' 'A Dis-

gust to the christian religion,' 'A Sun to dispel the Darkness of christianity,' and discussions. To accomplish this more fully, we have opened a room in Salay-street, at Peth-naiken Pettah, called the room for preaching the Sirhanthams or Shastras of the Hindu religion. In this room 200 young men shall be taught in Tâmil grammer, arithmetic, poetical works, Shastras attached to the Siva and Vishnu sects, objections to christian religion, &c. The preaching shall be performed on every Friday."

A shameful attempt has recently been made by the Hindoos of Madras to bring into open contempt the doctrines of the christian faith, for which purpose, indeed, a regular plan was organised. This is, indeed, a grateful return for the tolerance which has ever been adopted by our government towards them, and for the many benefits we have conferred on their race.—*Chronicle*.

COBBETT'S OPINION OF PARSONS.—I have sometimes been half tempted to believe that the magpie first suggested to tyrants the idea of having a tithe-eating clergy. The magpie devours the corn and grain—so does the parson. The magpie takes the wool from sheep's backs—so does the parson. The magpie devours alike the young animals and the eggs—so does the parson. The magpie's clack is everlastingly going—so is the parson's. The magpie repeats by rote words that are taught it—so does the parson. The magpie is always skipping and hopping and peeping into other nests—so is the parson. The magpie's colour is partly black and partly white—so is the parson's. The greediness, impudence, and cruelty of magpies are proverbial—so are those of the parson.

The next number of the *Oracle* will contain an ADDRESS from G. J. HOLYOAKE, upon his liberation.

A Correspondent is informed that the "Christian Curse," which appeared in this paper, was copied from the letter of a correspondent of the *Morning Herald*, and however horrible it may appear, it is so decidedly in harmony with new testament christianity, that its authenticity does not admit of a doubt.

SOUTHWELL'S LIBERATION FUND. THE Managers of the Social Institution, Lawrence-street, Birmingham, having kindly given the use of their Hall for Tuesday, the 14th of February, a

CONCERT AND BALL will take place in the evening of that day, the profits to be devoted to the above fund. G. J. HOLYOAKE will deliver a short ADDRESS.

Printed and Published by THOMAS PATERSON, No. 46, Wych-street, Strand, London, to whom all Communications should be addressed. Saturday, February 11, 1843.

THE
ORACLE OF REASON:
Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

“FAITH’S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE”

EDITED BY THOMAS PATERSON.

No. 62.] *Originally Edited by CHARLES SOUTHWELL, sentenced, on January 15, 1842, to Twelve Months’ Imprisonment in Bristol Gaol, and to pay a fine of £100, [PRICE 1D. for Blasphemy, contained in No. 4.*
Second Editor, G. J. HOLYOAKE, sentenced, on August 15, 1842, to Six Months’ Imprisonment in Gloucester Gaol, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.

ADDRESS FROM MR. HOLYOAKE,

On his Release from Gloucester Gaol.

MY FRIENDS.—It is now six months since, cut and hacked, “I fell,” not merely in the language of the parable, but literally “among thieves.” Of my new acquaintances, the saints, I am afraid I must say, as William Hutton said of an untoward sweetheart—“there was little love between us at first, and heaven has been pleased to decrease it on a further acquaintance.” Christians profess to draw men to Jesus with “cords of love,” but was it not for their judicious foresight in telling us that they are cords of love, I guess that few would find it out.

To speak first of personal matters, I scarcely know how to make acknowledgment to the many friends to whom I owe them—from Gloucester, Cheltenham, Birmingham, London, and other places, I received acts of attention and kindness, the value of which I can better estimate than express. But for what has been contributed for my support and for that of my family during my imprisonment, I believe no thanks were asked, and that none are wished. I believe that what has been given, has been given freely, but it is still proper to own the service rendered. My constitution accorded so ill with the diet and damp of the gaol, that I soon found myself in considerable danger, from which I was only relieved by the nutritious food which my friends supplied me.

I am naturally concerned to make these acknowledgments, because a man always values highly the kindness he does not

expect. When the words were spoken which led to my prosecution, I expected that the cautious would think that I had gone “too far”—that the prudent would think that I had been too rash—that my friends would be afraid for me, and that the timid would be afraid for themselves. But I held with Polydamus, that—

To speak his thoughts, is every freeman’s right,
In peace and war, in council and in fight.

And what I regarded as greater than my right I felt it to be my duty—there is no higher obligation known among men, than faithfulness to truth. Besides, my honour was concerned, I could not descend to that disingenuousness I had so often counselled others to scorn. Hence, in the course I took, I looked not to consequences, I cared not for them—a man’s true concern is with his principles, and not with his fate. I pretended to no public virtue, and I laid claim to no praise—I did no more than every man ought to do. That doing so little, has been so rewarded by the warm exertions of so many friends for my comfort, I must be pleased—but had nothing been done, I trust I should have found pride in penury and satisfaction under neglect, in the reflection that I had discharged my duty and preserved my honour.

Of my treatment in gaol I shall say little, because I care little. I hope that no cruelty will ever induce me to flatter or connive at those absurdities I conscientiously condemn.

When my memorial, published in No. 47 of the *Oracle*, was returned from the Secretary of State, for the opinions of the visiting magistrates, they came to me, and one of them stormed out with great violence—“You were sent here, sir, for punishment, and you

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have nothing else to expect. I consider you worse than the greatest felon in the gaol, you have been guilty of the most atrocious crime a man can possibly commit. I have told Sir James Graham what you deserve." I knew that these magistrates were christians, I was told they were gentlemen, but I thought them furies.

The prison diet was bread, gruel, and potatoes. On two days in each week boiled rice was substituted for potatoes, and after I had been in prison two months, I was, by the rules, allowed a small portion of salt beef on Thursdays and Sundays. As this fare is deemed in Gloucestershire a famous specific for the cure of atheism, it may not be out of place to dilate on its virtues. The gruel was little remarkable for its delicious flavour and little celebrated for its nutritious qualities, and known by the luxurious cognomen of "skilly." The rice had a blue cast, a saline taste, and a slimy look. The beef I could not often taste, seldom chew, and never digest—I should say it was rather *leather* mode than *a la mode*. The whole of the food could only be taken by a ploughman's appetite, and only be digested by a navigator's stomach.

I confess that the commencement of the prosecution rather spoiled my temper, but that lasted not long—a little reflection convinced me that christians could not do me a worse harm, than to make me resemble themselves, either in the matter of their principles, or their mode of defending them.

The indirect occasion of my prosecution was the editorship of the *Oracle*. When Mr. Southwell was apprehended, no Social Missionary came forward to continue his paper, although many of them were better qualified to do so than myself. Socialism had always attached great importance to freedom of expression, and socialism's advocates had been styled "apostles of free thought." Knowing this, I felt that it would be a dishonourable reflection should any one refuse, personally, to support what he was known publicly to approve. Had Mr. Fleming been placed in Mr. Southwell's situation, and had he been of opinion that I could have defended his violated liberty by taking his place, I should have edited the *New Moral World* as cheerfully as I did the *Oracle of Reason*. In common with others, I had then some doubt, though I have none now, of the propriety of what Mr. Southwell was saying, but I had no doubt as to the propriety of Mr. Southwell's saying what he thought useful. I never had a doubt of his right, and every man's right, to be heard in his own way, and in his own words. When I speak of "freedom of speech," and "liberty for all," I know of no distinction between myself and those who differ from me—I see with an equal eye the Atheist and the christian, the

violent and the gentle, the dogmatic and the modest. It is not to be inferred from this that I consider Mr. Southwell violent and dogmatic, for I know him to have much more coolness than he is credited with, and I think him much less dogmatic than his opponents.

My connection with the *Oracle* was connected with my prosecution in this manner. When the magistrates of Cheltenham found that their behaviour to me was without defence, they victimised Adams to make up my case. On my trial the prosecuting counsel, by a wilful departure from his duty, gave the jury the cue that I was editor of the *Oracle*, and had written the libel for which Mr. Adams was indicted. The judge took advantage of this in summing up to the jury. The fact was this, I was in Gloucester gaol when it was written, and knew nothing of its existence till nearly a fortnight after it was printed. But I did not care to state this, as it would have seemed like shrinking from the sentiments Mr. Adams was indicted for having published. It would then have been said, that even I condemned what he had done, and I should have virtually delivered bound to the judge, my friend, whom it was my duty to protect, and my desire to justify.

With regard to the utility of the prosecutions, judged with reference to the attainment of a greater degree of mental liberty, I believe that if their effects are viewed through the kaleidoscope of ever-varying expediency, that there appears much to rejoice at and little to regret.

As there is a vulgar notion in the public mind that these prosecutions are calculated to change to christianity the sentiments of those who are the subjects of them, it may be useful to say that they have not changed mine. Nor am I aware that gaolers were ever found attractive expounders of any religion—of one thing I am satisfied, that if christians *are* followers of a meek and lowly master, they are miserable imitators of their famous original, and I cannot make out by what right I am called upon to admire what they so wretchedly set forth. Christians are still glorying themselves in prosecutions, and, like Christ, cursing every tree which bears not the fruit they want. Yet some persons cant to us about persecution being *contrary* to the spirit of christianity—if so christians are very supine in not suppressing it. They should be anxious to wipe off such a crying disgrace, but as they are not, they therefore need not expect that I shall regard what they neglect. In the most impartial mood we must halt between two opinions as to whether christianity be not a great evil or a great cipher. If persecution proceed from it, then is christianity a dangerous evil—and if persecution does not, then is christianity's influence miserably inefficacious, and just

good for nothing. But we are not justified in retaining even these dubious conclusions. For christianity's want of influence to repress persecution, not only renders it useless, and therefore a cumberer of the ground—but its being the inexhaustible armoury whence persecutors draw their weapons, renders it perpetually pernicious, and hence we must incline to the opinion of its being a great evil.

The recent and current prosecutions for opinion's sake must have the effect of stimulating every one who values mental liberty to fresh exertions for its attainment. The history of despotism is nothing but the infringement of the right of opinion, in some shape or other. The right to express our opinions freely, is the most sacred right of humanity, and if our most sacred right obtains not our most sacred attention, we had better cease talking of our rights altogether.

That is true of christianity, which has been ably said of catholicism, "Humane individuals may express their abhorrence of the sentiments of persecution—bodies of men, sections of the church itself, nay, many of the dignitaries may abjure them, and protest that they have never acted upon them, nor ever will enforce them, and yet all this will not avail to give a discerning man the smallest security for his liberty, his property, or his life—for as long as those intolerant decrees remain upon the statute book, they can at any time be revived." It therefore behoves every one to pay attention to that liberty, for the loss of which no religion will ever compensate. The conviction should be permanent, that christianity is a fearful thing. Bad men may laud it—mistaken men may contend that there is some good in it—unthinking men may give currency to its terms—and weak men may connive at its delusions, but we ought to regard with different sentiments a system which, in defending its dogmas, tramples upon the feelings of humanity, the principles of liberty, and the sentiments of honour and virtue. It seems, that not only to ourselves, but in mercy to mankind we should beware of it. Christianity once drank the life-blood of its victims, and it is now but a snake benumbed by intelligence, which if once warmed by ill-bestowed kindness will again fasten its fangs in the heart of humanity.

Let us then secure the antidote—free expression of opinion. Shall it be said that we are content to wear mental fetters? When protestants, who dare never think without the bible and prayer-book, have shaken off the iron despotism of catholicism—when such drivellers in intelligence as methodists and ranters, have spurned the brutal domination of the church—are we, who have drank of the waters of mental freedom, quietly to submit our thoughts to be cut down to the Procrustean bed of *their* confined notions?

Let not christians mock at Infidel pusillanimity, and deride us as holders of craven principles. Not only for ourselves but for others are our exertions demanded. What patrimony has the poor man but his free thoughts? No industry will save him from chill penury's grip, nor virtue from the poor-house grave—let us then preserve him the inheritance of mental liberty, for which the throne or the rich man's palace would be a poor exchange, and in the enjoyment of which the proud man's contumely is forgotten.

It has always been deemed noble to aim at leaving the world better than we found it. To accomplish this it must be asked—what are our children intended to be? Are they to be respectable, or are they to be virtuous? Are they to be faithful to truth or custom? Are they to reverence humanity or wealth? If their youth is to be generous, their manhood noble, their institutions free, they must possess mental liberty—the privilege to speak the truth—and be encouraged in the practice. Mental freedom is the element of all virtue, the principle of true greatness, the spirit of the world's progression!

WHAT CHRISTIANS WOULD—

AND

WHAT ATHEISTS SHOULD DO.

THE recent righteous and god-suggested proceedings at Bow-street, prove most beautifully, and no doubt much to the satisfaction of all Infidels, that neither justice nor law can be obtained for them at the hands of their christian countrymen, unless by force, that is, legal force. The laws of this unmeasurably blest, because christian, country, and of this transcendently happy, because barbarously ignorant, nation—are rightfully named—christian. In their purely christian character consists their great beauty, which has materially, if not wholly, contributed in rendering us—Englishmen, not Infidels—the "glory of the world, and the envy of surrounding nations." With the laws of England, whether statute or common, as with christianity, whether catholic or evangelical, no two persons are or ever were agreed as to their precise meaning, neither does there appear any probability that two such beings will ever be found.

Now, from this similarity of primary conditions, are produced strikingly analagous effects—for inasmuch as it is of the first importance that we should understand the means by which we can secure eternal happiness when we leave this world, and which right understanding cannot be readily obtained in consequence of the doubtful and mysterious nature of the professed conditions—it has been deemed necessary to

select and educate a number of persons, whose duty it is to study and explain what is inexplicable and "past finding out" in the decrees of the godhead—and thus have we sought to remove the obstacle in the way of our eternal salvation, and escape from the pains and penalties attaching to sin and wickedness. As it is with the spiritual, so is it with our temporal difficulties—the laws of our glorious constitution, those laws which our revered and justly celebrated judges have so loved to descant upon, and the immortal beauties of which they have so carefully transmitted to posterity, taking especial care that none of their sharp edges were injured in their passage—those laws, based, as I have before stated, upon the "rock of our faith," and modelled after the same holy pattern, required like machinery to make them available to those for whose use they were intended—and strictly following in every particular the original, another class of men were set apart to study and explain them, as we have before seen was done in respect of our heavenly laws. In the first case parsons was the result—in the second lawyers—and in both cases a heavy expense was incurred, which the ignorant and foolish have to pay.

But the parallel does not end here, for the exposition of the heavenly will on the one hand, and the administration of English law on the other, are remarkable for being essentially distinct when applied to the cases of a poor and rich man, or of a christian and an Infidel. To the rich man christianity is all meekness and humility, viewing with gentleness his " manifold sins and wickednesses," and her authorised teachers "never mention hell to ears polite"—not so with the poor man, his most trifling errors are magnified into monstrous excesses, and in addition to damning misery here, he is miserably damned hereafter. The same holds good with the law, the weight of your purse and not the justice of your cause, the number of your ingots, and not the number of your reasons, deciding the question.

After what I have said of the difficulties surrounding a proper understanding of either christianity or English law, it will be readily conceived that when a christian, who is also a lawyer, has to administer the law, that his decision will be in harmony with the law, and the law being in harmony with christianity—the three, the decision, the law, and christianity, form together a perfectly harmonious whole, a trinity of moral beauties not to be easily matched. This is as true in fact, as it appears reasonable in theory. For instance, the bible says, an "unjust judge is an abomination in the eyes of the lord"—the English law says that any one who exhibits indecent or blasphemous prints in a thoroughfare shall be punished—

and a christian judge, a professed believer in the bible, declares that a "shop window" is a thoroughfare, hoping thereby to "crush" an Infidel who is brought before him for his adjudication. Here we have, in one act, a total disregard, by a professor, of heaven's boasted decrees, a circumstance, by the way, of hourly occurrence—a violation of the law—and a gross departure from morality! Could anything be more in keeping with christianity or with English law? Christianity is mysterious and brutal—the law is obscure and cruel—and its administration is stupid and malignant!

I think it must be apparent to the most casual observer, that justice can never be obtained for an Infidel from a christian, where the law is christian made and christian administered.

So long as christians have power they will use it to "crush" those who differ with them in opinion. Their vindictiveness is only to be equalled by their cowardice—and a defeat on their part may be safely calculated on as the forerunner of some more dastardly and tyrannical effort of revenge, regardless of shame, of justice, or of the rights of humanity. The following recommendation from the *Times*, is an example of the true spirit of christianity, as embodied in one of its defenders and authorised expounders. What christianity as "by law established" means, might here be seen at a glance.

BLASPHEMOUS PUBLICATIONS.

Sir.—The continuance of the nuisance in Holywell and Wych-streets, and the report of the proceedings at Bow-street in your paper of to-day, conclusively show that the present law is insufficient for effectually suppressing the sale and exhibition of indecent and blasphemous publications.

Allow me to suggest that an enactment resembling those which relate to gaming-houses and penny theatres might, with great propriety, be applied to the shops and houses where these publications are sold. It is difficult to understand why indecent printsellers are entitled to greater indulgence than the keepers of gaming-tables, or why the landlords of such infamous tenants should be permitted to escape, while the landlords of penny theatres are liable to penalties. Indeed, the landlords are, in the majority of instances, not less criminal than the shopkeepers themselves; and some service might be done to the public if the name and residence of Paterson's landlord were exposed and circulated with his own. The enactment I propose would be to the following effect:—

"Be it enacted that if any person shall report in writing to the commissioners of police of the metropolis, acting under an act of parliament made and passed in the session of parliament of the 2d and 3d years of the reign of her present majesty, entitled 'an act for further improving the police in and near

the metropolis,' 'that there are good grounds for believing that in any house, shop, or room within the metropolitan police districts, any obscene, indecent, or blasphemous print, book, pamphlet, writing, or drawing, or publication whatsoever, is kept for the purpose of sale, or is publicly exhibited or exposed for any purpose;' and if two or more householders dwelling within the said district, and not belonging to the metropolitan police force, shall make oath in writing, to be by them taken and subscribed before a magistrate, and annexed to the said report (which oath every magistrate is hereby required and empowered to administer and receive), that the matters and things complained of by such persons so reporting as aforesaid are commonly known and believed by them to be true, it shall be lawful for the said commissioners, and they are hereby required, by order in writing, to authorise the superintendant belonging to the said metropolitan police force, to enter any such shop, house, or room with such constables as shall be directed by the said commissioners to accompany him, and, if necessary, to use force for the purpose of making such entry, whether by breaking open doors, or otherwise, and to seize, take, and carry away every obscene, indecent, or blasphemous print, book, pamphlet, writing, drawing, publication, matter, or thing whatsoever found in such shop, house, or rooms; and the owner or keeper of the same, or other person having the care or management thereof, shall be liable to a penalty of not more than £100, and in the discretion of the magistrate before whom he shall be convicted of the offence shall be committed to the house of correction, with or without hard labour, for a time not less than three nor more than six calendar months; and upon conviction of any such offender, all the obscene, indecent, or blasphemous prints, books, pamphlets, writings, drawings, publications, matters, and things which shall have been seized as aforesaid, shall be burned or otherwise destroyed; and every person keeping, or using, or knowingly letting the said shop, house, or room for the purpose of being used for the purposes aforesaid, shall be liable to a penalty of not less than £20, and not more than £100, and in the discretion of the magistrate before whom he shall be convicted of the offence may be committed to the house of correction for a time not less than three nor more than six calendar months; the said last-mentioned penalty to be recovered by any person on whose information such last-mentioned offender shall have been convicted of such last-mentioned offence."

It can hardly be objected to such an enactment that it interferes too extensively with the liberty, or rather with the license, of the subject; because it simply embodies the substance of the present law with reference to the landlords of unlicensed theatres and the keepers of common gambling-houses. I am, sir, your obedient servant,

A SPECIAL PLEADER.

Inner Temple, Jan. 28.

A crisis has arrived, and "victory or death" are offered to our notice—either alternative depending on ourselves. They cannot beat us if we are brave—temporary defeats we may suffer, but success is certain if we persevere. Roused by our late attacks, the christians will raise heaven and earth to accomplish our destruction, as may be gathered from the foregoing, and their success will be proportioned to our apathy. When we look at what has been already done, by some few individuals, with exceedingly limited means, what cause have we for despair?—have we not rather cause for hearty congratulation and ardent hope? Shall then those exertions and those successes be given to the winds?—shall not the sufferings of Southwell, Holyoake, and Paterson be avenged, by the uprooting of the tyrannical system which has inflicted physical torture upon worthy men, for a mere difference of opinion? Shall not the sufferings of our martyrs be the seed of our cause? Come, then, you who *feel* what you so often express, if you have not done your duty—if you have not assisted to the extent of your means, whatever they might be, delay no longer—"work while it is yet day, for the night *may* come when no man can work." You are not all expected to be Southwells, Holyoakes, and Patersons, though if you were like unto one or the other of these it would be so much the better. If you cannot do as they have done, perhaps you can support them, and others like them, in their exertions, and place in their power the means of defending themselves to the greatest advantage against their malicious foes. "THE ANTI-PERSECUTION UNION" was established for this purpose, and has proved an indispensable auxiliary in the movement—aid it, then, with all your might—let its coffers be filled, and you will be certain to reap the benefit. Every one, I should think, who is willing, can do something, no matter how trifling—so say the parsons, and I think we might, in this case, take a leaf out of their book with advantage. But supposing it to be impossible to do any active good, in particular instances—let parties so situated beware they do no harm, by throwing wet blankets upon the exertions of others.

I shall have a few remarks to offer upon wet-blanketism in a future number.

W. C.

SOUTHWELL'S LIBERATION FUND.

THE Managers of the Social Institution, Lawrence-street, Birmingham, having kindly given the use of their Hall for Tuesday, the 21st of February, a

CONCERT AND BALL

will take place in the evening of that day, the profits to be devoted to the above fund.

G. J. HOLYOAKE will deliver a short ADDRESS.

THE FREE INQUIRER'S WHY AND
BECAUSE.

WRITTEN BY CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

XII.

Why is it said that nature delights in variety?

Because it is well known that no two substances are precisely the same in form and character. By pestle and mortar we may reduce bodies to powder, but however we may labour, no matter to what degree of fineness the particles may be reduced, still the infinite divisibility of matter leaves the mind no satisfaction, as an atom, or as they have been termed, the first seeds of things, has never been seen by human eye, not even by the mind's eye, for it is impossible that human beings should rest anywhere in their conceptions of bigness or smallness, so that the most chemists can do is, to change the form, dress, and appearance of matter—as we cannot even conceive of its annihilation, any more than its creation, itself being the cause of all things, and itself uncaused. “The divisibility even of very small portions of matter, as a grain into many millions of parts, has long been familiar. Matter has been regarded as infinitely indivisible, but this opinion is no longer entertained. From recent discoveries in chemistry (see Atomic Theory), it is considered extremely probable that all masses of matter are composed of particles or atoms, totally indivisible by any power to which they may be subjected in the ordinary course of nature, but having all the essential properties of matter as truly as any masses which they may suppose. They may be divided in a mathematical point of view, but they are physically indivisible.” These observations are mere sound, without signification, or if they signify anything, they involve an inconsistency or an absolute contradiction—first, we are told that the opinion is no longer entertained that matter is infinitely indivisible, because, forsooth, recent chemical discoveries make it probable that particles or atoms are totally indivisible by any known process to which they may be subject in the ordinary course of nature, but having all the essential properties of matter. All matter has certain properties, as weight, form, inertia, impenetrability, indestructibility—nor can the mind conceive the destruction of an atom. That all atoms must have weight and form is clear—impenetrability signifies that no portion of matter can occupy the same place at the same time as another inertia, that it cannot of itself move, and expresses the resistance which matter makes to a change of state, whether that be motion or rest—so it is presumed that a body at rest would for ever remain so, were it not disturbed by

some external cause, and that all bodies in motion would continue to move on, were not some external influence exerted to bring them to a stand still. As, therefore, it is manifest that all atoms must have the atom properties, it must be true that matter is infinitely divisible, even though we cannot divide it—a conclusion at which the mind is forced to arrive—for that which is a whole can be halved, at all events the half exists, which may be again halved *ad infinitum*. Dr. Lardner observes, that the blood which flows in the veins of animals, is not, as it seems, a uniformly red liquid. It consists of small red globules floating in a transparent fluid called serum. In different figures these globules differ both in figure and in magnitude. In man, and in all animals who suckle their young, they are perfectly round or spherical. In birds or fishes they are of an oblong or spheroidal form. In the human species the diameter of the globules is about the four thousandth of an inch. Hence it follows that in a drop of blood, which would remain suspended from the point of a fine needle, there must be about a million of globules. Small as these globules are, the animal kingdom presents beings whose whole bodies are still more minute. Animalcules have been discovered, whose magnitude is such, that a million of them does not exceed the bulk of a grain of sand, and yet each of these creatures is composed of members as curiously organised as those of the largest species; they have life and spontaneous motion, and are endued with sense and instinct. In the liquids in which they live, they are observed to move with astonishing speed and activity, nor are their motions blind or fortuitous, but evidently governed by choice, and even directed to an end. They use food and drink, from which they derive nutrition, and are therefore furnished with a digestive apparatus. They have great muscular power, and are furnished with limbs and muscles of strength and flexibility. They are susceptible of the same appetites, and obnoxious to the same passions, the gratification of which is attended with the same results as in our own species. It has been asserted that the wings of certain insects are so thin, that 50,000 of them placed one over the other, would not form a pile one quarter of an inch in height; but, perhaps, the most remarkable calculation was that made by Newton, who determined the thickness of transparent substances by observing what colours they reflected. A soap bubble, which is nothing more than a thin transparent shell of water with the substance called soap, reflects different colours from different parts of its surface. Immediately before the bubble bursts, a black spot may be observed near the top—at this part the thickness has been proved not to exceed the 2,500,000th of an inch.

PHYSICAL MYTHOLOGY.

BY LORD BACON.

II.

THE FABLE OF PROMETHEUS,

Explained of an over-ruling providence, and of human nature.

EXPLANATION.

THIS fable contains and enforces many just and serious considerations—some whereof have been, long since, well observed—but some again remain perfectly untouched. Prometheus clearly and expressly signifies providence—for of all the things in nature, the formation and endowment of man was singled out by the ancients, and esteemed the peculiar work of providence. The reason hereof seems—1. that the nature of man includes a mind and understanding, which is the seat of providence—2. that it is harsh and incredible, to suppose reason and mind should be raised, and drawn out of senseless and irrational principles; whence it become almost inevitable, that providence is implanted in the human mind, in conformity with, and by the direction and the design of the great over-ruling providence.—But, 3. the principal cause is this—that man seems to be the thing, in which the whole world centers, with respect to the final causes—so that if he were away, all other things would stray and fluctuate, without end or intention, or become perfectly disjoined, and out of frame. For all things are made subservient to man—and he receives use and benefit from them all. Thus the revolutions, places, and periods of the celestial bodies, serve him for distinguishing times and seasons, and for dividing the world into different regions—the meteors afford him prognostications of the weather—the winds sail our ships, drive our mills, and move other machines—and the vegetables and animals of all kinds, either afford us matter for houses and habitations, cloathing, food, physic, or tend to ease, or delight, support, or refresh us—so that everything in nature seems not made for itself, but for man.

And it is not without reason added, that the mass of matter, whereof man was formed, should be mixed up with particles taken from different animals, and wrought in with the clay—because, it is certain, that of all things in the universe, man is the most compounded, and recomposed body—so that the ancients not improperly styled him a microcosm, or little world within himself. For although the chemists have absurdly, and too literally, wrested and perverted the term microcosm, whilst they pretend to find all kind of mineral and vegetable matters, or something corresponding to them in man,

yet it remains firm and unshaken, that the human body is of all substances the most mixed, and organical—whence it has surprising powers and faculties. For the powers of simple bodies are but few, though certain and quick—as being little broken, or weakened—and not counterbalanced by mixture; but excellence, and quantity of energy, reside in mixture and composition.

(To be continued.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of the Oracle of Reason.

FREE DISCUSSION?

MR. EDITOR — I have rejoiced to observe of late some indications of a plan of proceeding on the part of the Socialists, differing from the truckling policy which was sometime adopted amongst them, and which was so justly condemned by the *Oracle*, as being unworthy of men who, although they do not corporately profess atheism, any more than they profess christianity, or mohammedanism, do, nevertheless, pride themselves mainly upon the *verbal* assertion of the right of free inquiry. I say *verbal* assertion, because in too many instances they have shown themselves ready to back out from any thing beyond, so soon as the front of power was reared against them, or seemed to threaten them with disagreeable consequences. I was particularly pleased with the improvement in the Edinburgh branch reported in the *Oracle*, No. 56.

“Would I could answer this comfort with the like,” but my present object is to draw your attention to an instance of the desertion of principle, hoping that they who were not ashamed to be actors therein, may yet be ashamed on seeing it in print.

A weekly discussion has been established at the Whitechapel Institution, about 18 months, open to all parties. The regulations were drawn up by the officers of the institution, one of which provided that the audience should decide, by show of hands, upon any question which might be proposed for discussion. In accordance therewith, I proposed the question, “Is there a god?”—which was put to the audience, in form—but, at the persuasion of Mr. Cooper, a Socialist, who said that “the man who could look upon this beautiful universe and say there was no god was unworthy of a reply,” the question was negatived. I, however, feeling inclined to have the question decided by a larger audience, brought it forward again on the following Monday, when lo! the president of the branch, who occupied the chair, refused to put it to the meeting, who were evidently anxious to have the question discussed—and this in defiance of his own rules, which con-

time to be gravely read every discussion night. Comment would be superfluous—surely tis too bad for persons who can speak and act thus, to call themselves by the name of Socialists.

ALFRED DUFFIELD.

10, Friendly-place, White Horse-lane, Mile-end.

MR. CHARLES SOUTHWELL
AT LIBERTY!

THE Committee have great pleasure in stating that Mr. C. Southwell is again at liberty, and in making this announcement they feel some satisfaction in knowing that they have done their duty, and they now call upon the share-holders to do theirs, by exerting themselves to dispose of as many tickets for the performance as possible, seeing that it is the duty and interest of the share-holders to do so, in order to get the full amount of their shares returned. Charles Southwell deserves well of every one who values his freedom, by his honest, courageous, and noble conduct, and the way in which the shares have been taken up, in order to obtain his release, evinces that such conduct is duly appreciated, and he will no doubt be received by a crowded house the first night he makes his appearance in public, which will be on Thursday evening, the 7th of March, in the dramatic performance at the large Theatre, ROTUNDA, BLACK-FRIAR'S-ROAD, which has been commodiously fitted up expressly for the occasion. The Committee have entered into arrangements with the proprietors of the Rotunda, thinking that by so doing they would be assisting that flourishing branch of the Rational Society, as also taking the best mode they could to return the capital to the share-holders, and advance the public comfort and convenience. The Committee have had professional advice upon the *legality* of having an amateur dramatic performance in the above commodious place.

The performance will commence with Shakspeare's admired play of the *MERCHANT OF VENICE*, in which MR. SOUTHWELL will sustain the character of *Shylock*. After which the third act of Shakspeare's Tragedy of *HAMLET*. To conclude with the popular farce of the *SPIGALFIELDS' WEAVER*. Considerable attention will be paid to the getting up of these pieces, and the different characters will be sustained by Amateurs of talent and experience.

No money will be taken at the Theatre, and an early application for Tickets is desirable.

Tickets are now ready, and may be obtained at Mr. Hetherington's 11, Bolt-court Fleet-

street; Mr. Watson, City-road; Mr. Pitt, Grocer, 40, Prince's-street, Portman's Market; Hudson's Coffee House, Charles-street-Covent Garden; Crown Coffee House, Edgware-road; Mr. Goodaire's, Church-street, Kennington; H. Edwards's, 10, Black Lion-yard, Whitechapel; S. Houghton's, 7, Commercial-road, Whitechapel; and at all the Social Institutions in London.

The shareholders are requested to meet the committee on Sunday evening, the 19th of February, 1843, in the John-street Institution, after the lecture, for the purpose of receiving tickets for the performance, and other important business.

R. REDBURN, Secretary.

ANTI-PERSECUTION UNION.

The Collectors are particularly requested to bring in the amount of their subscriptions, as the Committee are about to make out their accounts for publication. Two of the Committee will attend in the Coffee Room of the Social Hall, John-street, on Saturday, the 19th, and two others at the Rotunda, on the same day, from 7 to 10 o'clock in the evening, and afterwards on each Wednesday Evening at the Magnet Coffee-house, Drury Lane.

N.B. All letters in future to be directed to No 11, Bolt Court, Fleet-street. M. RYALL, Sec.

SUBSCRIPTIONS.

For the Anti-Persecution Union.

Collector 26..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	£0	4	7
" 111 ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0	1	0
A Few Friends to Free Inquiry, Manchester	0	10	0							
Anarchist ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0	0	6
Q in the corner ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0	1	0
Anti-humbug ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	0	0
W. J. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0	5	0
Atheist ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	10	0	0

In *Oracle* 59, Miller, Gallashiels, ought to have been 2s. 6d. instead of 2s.

London.

M. RYALL, Sec.

Sums received by Mr. Holyoake, during his imprisonment—

David Miller, Esq. Sheffield ..	..	..	..	£0	10	0
A Few Literary Gentlemen, Sheffield ..	..	..	..	1	0	0
Per Mr. Wilkinson, Sheffield..	..	..	..	0	2	6

THEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, *Globe Coffee House, Shoe Lane, Fleet-street*—To inquire into the origin of the Religious Idea—Religious Systems—Modes of Worship—their Origin—Progress—Present State and Prospects—with a view to the discovery and promulgation of Truth, and the overthrow of Error. Every Tuesday evening at half-past eight. Admission Free.

NOTICE.

Received—"God and his hell-trap, or the biblical account of the fall, by a Believer."

J. R. is informed that all the newspapers sent to Gloucester Gaol for Mr. Holyoake, were given up to him on the day of his liberation, and he has since had the pleasure of perusing them.

Printed and Published by THOMAS PATERSON, No. 46, Wych-street, Strand, London, to whom all Communications should be addressed.

Saturday, February 18, 1843.

THE
ORACLE OF REASON:
Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

“FAITH’S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE”

EDITED FOR THOMAS PATERSON.

*Originally Edited by CHARLES SOUTHWELL, sentenced, on January 15, 1842,
to Twelve Months’ Imprisonment in Bristol Gaol, and to pay a fine of £100,
for Blasphemy, contained in No. 4.*

*Second Editor, G. J. HOLYOAKE, sentenced, on August 15, 1842, to Six Months’
Imprisonment in Gloucester Gaol, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.*

No. 63.]

[PRICE 1D.]

LITTLE FAITH MUCH GAIN.

POLITICAL tyranny stands on the pedestal of religion, and it seems likely to stand there while religion remains. Religion is a kind of mother tyranny, it generates so many others—and it is a kind of master tyranny for it exceeds all others. Other tyrannies manacle the body, but this manacles the mind, for every feeling and impulse are prostrated before its debasing influence. I know that we are told much of its beautiful voice, whispering peace and love, but owing to the clatter of policemen’s truncheons, the clash of arms, and crash of windows, I have been unable to hear it. Of course it is very wrong in the *canaille* not to do the devout on religious doctrines, but a Cardinal Dupéron, or a jesuit Maldona, can take, with safety, a side laugh at the trinity, and offer to argue for god or against him just as royalty may be inclined. Now, what these pious fathers would do in jest, I would do in earnest—and that liberty which has been confined to the uninitiated few, I would extend to the initiated many—believing sincerely that they who accept religion as a serious truth, accept for themselves a serious evil.

In life, religion makes its devotees imbeciles. Should a calamity befall a religious man, instead of resolutely determining upon its removal by human and certain means, he consults some godly fortune-teller, who advises patience and submission, and tells him it is merely a proof of divine pleasure—for “whom the lord loveth he chasteneth.” Is not the Atheist more reasonable, who endeavours to remove the earthly cause of the evil which he can see, and which he can

grapple, than in quietly lying down to be sucked quite dry by theological vipers? Death, which is the termination of human suffering, is not the termination of bigotry—the religionist prolongs his misery, and extends his fears beyond the grave. Hell, with its waves of fire, its tortures and its demons, live so frightfully in his distorted imagination, as to make here the very hell he wishes to shun hereafter. Verily, he who is without all this terrible delusion is a great gainer. Surely, while the Atheist believes that there are no gods, the religionist must wish there were none. If the Atheist believes little, he fears little, and he suffers little. But he hopes much for humanity, because he sees how it can be redeemed by human means.

Supposing there to be a god, if a good one, he must regret the wretched delusion under which the pious labour, and must feel pleased to see it dispelled. And atheism is profitable both for the life that now is, and also for that which *may* come.

As far as mankind are concerned generally, how glorious would it have been had our forefathers been Atheists! How great would have been the change for the better in the ancient world! When gods were reduced to one, had the reduction been then carried a little further, and the belief in one god been exploded, how many myriads would have been saved, who have since been immolated to appease his supposed fury. In modern times, Arabia, Palestine, Mexico, Peru, would have been saved a thousand horrors, and France would have been saved from the terrors of Bartholomew’s day, and we from the butchery of Rathcormac. And humanity is a wretched compound if its own energies—unpolluted by spiritual delusions—had not before this have raised the physical condition of our working classes to comfort, and their moral character to intelligence and independence.

T. P.

ANATOMY OF HETERODOXIES, SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE "ORACLE."

Definition for the unlearned—

Orthodoxy is my doxy—heterodoxy is any other man's doxy.—*Philpotts.*

FROM the examination of a most important position of the *Deist*, that of the connection or inseparableness of *theology* and *naturalism*, from which, in the previous paper, I attempted to dislodge the writer, I proceed to consider some other of the leading points laid down in his theory. The *Deist* appears not only as an expositor of the opinions of an individual, but proclaims itself as the organ of the Deists as a body. Assuming this as a correct statement on the part of the *Deist*, whether or not it continues its appearance contemporaneously with the *Oracle*, the present course of examination will be found worthy of another paper. Having already dissected the term "natural theology," I now arrive at another equally important branch of the inquiry. The alliance attempted to be set up between the *natural* and the *theological* was deemed irrational, inconsistent, and absurd. The connection between, or rather the identity assumed to belong to, the *religious* and the *moral*, will now come under examination.

A previous view of the connection attempted to be established between religion, and the memorable failure which resulted, will be found pointedly illustrative. The real, not nominal, importance of the function of religion and reason, has already appeared in its adoption one year and its rejection the next, by an intelligent and advanced association. This, if an unimportant alteration, and merely nominal, would have been eminently absurd—in fact, would not have been carried into effect. Changes had been before made in the appellation of the society, but they had reference to its altered position or to the new circumstances which had arisen. This last designation was not more lightly substituted, nor with less sound discretion than former titles. A new power had arisen within the society, one which by force of soft words and hard arguments wrought a change in the popular conviction. Thence did the "new view" of religion and reason, through the right exercise of the important right of free discussion, and the valuable machinery of universal suffrage, reach those quarters where the utterance of the desire became law. That important body of social, educational, moral, political, and scientific reformers, or aspirants after these reforms, popularly known as Socialists, officially entitled the "Universal Community Society of Rational Religionists," be-

came, by vote of delegates formally assembled, the "Society of Rationalists." A signal triumph of reason over religion, if reason can be said to triumph. A plain and broad line of demarcation was by this decision boldly proclaimed, and historically commemorated. It remains analytically to explain and impressively illustrate the respective terms, that just views may take root and produce practical results. The utter overthrow, both in every-day life, and in our educational attempts, of the accursedly debasing religious influences, would, in my opinion, be more fruitful of great and beneficial results than the accomplishment of any scheme of amelioration, republican or social institutions perhaps excepted. In fact, reform, or rather revolution, in this direction must be the forerunner or accompaniment of both political and social changes of any value. Without the subversion of religion in all its phases, I have no confidence in any proposed institutional arrangements, however fundamentally altered they may be in all other respects.

To return to the original point—the text suggestive of the present theme occupies no less prominent a station in the *Deist* than that of its motto, and is, of course, expository of the leading views of the publication under review. I must suppose, also, of the "numerous, intelligent, and respectable Deists of Great Britain, who cannot sympathise with either faction," that is, with the superstitionists on the one hand, or the Atheists on the other." It is this—

"The world is my country—and to do good is my religion."

In the first part I heartily concur. The sooner we obliterate all class, tribe, country, and colour distinctions, the better for the interests of humanity. To the second only shall I now direct my attention. The same leading idea, "to do good is my religion," has been expressed by the estimable man and enlightened philosopher, Robert Owen. The more my esteem is won by the untiring ardour of an enthusiastic and disinterested philanthropist—the more my admiration is called forth by the abilities which would eliminate from all by-gone philosophers one vast, beautiful, and harmonious scheme for human emancipation, the more anxious I become to dissent from what I deem erroneous in such respected authority, and the more desirous to do my part towards separating the false from the true. Mr. Owen has introduced, and such introduction was once lauded by numerous adherents, the "Religion of the New Moral World." He also said, and his saying was echoed by the same adherents—that the religion of the new moral word would henceforth consist in the practice of promoting unceasingly the happiness of mankind. He further called his fol-

lowers by the corporate name of "Universal Community Society of Rational Religionists." These introductions were resolutely opposed by equally devoted, but not equally servile disciples. There were those who drank deeply of his wisdom, who eagerly studied his lessons of charity, and affectionately hung round the venerable sage while striving to elevate themselves to the standard of morals inculcated and practised by him. Such students of the new philosophy, real lovers of truth, rather than lovers of party, instead of being deterred, were strongly stimulated to purify a system, when damaged by what they thought a most ungenial and "adulterate" mixture. One result of their exertions, in the disservice of religions and rational, has been already remarked—others remain to be accomplished, in the total separation of the religious from the moral, and the radical abolition of the former from the entire scheme of social institutional arrangements.

These memorable illustrations again bring me to the starting point, the analysis of *religion* and *morals*. I will not commence by defining either, but enumerate their principal characteristics, which will, in themselves furnish the best definition, and lead to the most correct understanding of their meaning or meanings.

Between the religious and the moral there exists as wide a distinction as between the religious and the reasonable. The religious themselves, for the most part, allow this difference, however they may simultaneously assert that reason agrees with and proves religion. The terms on which the truly religious receive reason are those of distant recognition, doubtful and suspicious salutation, misgivings and distrust—or at best they assign it a secondary place to religion. They will tolerate or embrace reason if apparently serviceable to religion, but if the least signs appear of disagreement, the former is summarily ejected.

The principal elements of religion, no matter under what aspect we behold it, are supernaturalism, revelation, faith, worship, credal systems. The principal elements of morality have reference to mutual rights and duties, self-government and improvement, the cultivation of the affections, together with the reconciliation or blending of an enlightened self-interest with the promotion of the general weal. How say the religionists themselves, the genuine, bona-fide religionists, not the pseudo or semi-philosophical sort? That a man may be a very moral man, but by no means a religious man. He may be a good son, father, brother, husband, citizen, a philanthropist, may "do as he would be done by," "the world may be his country—to do good his practice," he may "promote the greatest

happiness of the greatest number," he may continually exert himself to contribute to the enjoyment of all that has life. He may shape his life in accordance with each of these courses of action, as successively laid down by (as it is said) Jesus, Paine, Bentham, Owen, and still be eminently irreligious. "Grace might not abound," according to the evangelically religious. The "rational, mind-elevating, heart-cheering, and virtue sustaining principles of natural theology," according to the deistically religious might be disowned. Thus the man whose exemplary virtues were continually shedding happiness around, whose life was one untiring round of devotedness to the interests of humanity, would be excluded from each of the religious circles, whether large or small, whether the boundary line were more or less rigid or elastic. He would be, in fact, virtually outlawed from the religious world. The purists would find him to be without "saving faith," reliance on the "merits of the redeemer," a thorough conviction of his own worthlessness," as well as a proper frame of mind for repentance. The common place creedists, would observe that he lacked the ordinary amount of "faith," he did not believe a word of the "miracles," thought the "prophecies" perversions, "inspiration" a fiction, the "second person in the trinity" a fable, or the Jewish moralist a nonentity—therefore he was not a religious man. The "natural theologians," or "Deists," would bewail him, alas! as a "man without god!" they would discover that he did not look up "from nature to nature's god," that he—benighted man—did not see "the finger of god in the splendid revolutions of the planetary spheres," or acknowledge his "wisdom and power in the harmony of the universe." In fine, he would be without the "binding principle," and therefore without religion. Have I not now fairly dissected off religion and goddism from morality?

M. Q. R.

THEORY OF REGULAR GRADATION.

XXX.

(Mammalia continued.)

THE sternum or breast-bone, though essentially the same throughout the class as in the human subject, is somewhat modified in form by the shape of the chest. The sternum belongs to the class of flat bones. From its elongated form the old anatomists compared it to a sword, the handle, blade, and point of which they considered were represented by the several portions of which it consists in the adult subject.

The osseous boundaries of the thorax or chest are formed by thirty-seven bones, viz.

twelve dorsal vertebræ placed posteriorly, the sternum anteriorly, and twelve ribs on either side. The figure of the thorax in most apes, bats, and the greater number of the rodentia, and, in fact, of the class mammalia having clavicles or collar-bones, agrees with that of the human subject. The arrangement of the thorax causes man to move in the erect attitude. Its great lateral width and inconsiderable depth from sternum to spine, throw the arms apart, and increase their sphere of motion. The reverse characters, together with the absence of clavicles in quadrupeds, allow the fore-legs to approximate, to fall perpendicularly under the front of the body, and support it with ease and security.

Man combines by far the largest cranium with the smallest face—and animals deviate from these relations in proportion as they increase in stupidity and ferocity. By the head is understood all that part of the skeleton which is placed above the first cervical vertebra—it is of a spheroidal figure, elongated from before backwards, slightly compressed on the sides, contracted on the fore part, and expanded behind. It may be divided into two distinct parts, the cranium and face. The bones of the cranium are eight in number, and, by their junction with each other, form a large cavity for the protection of the brain—while those of the face, which are fourteen in number, form several smaller cavities connected with the senses of vision, taste and smell. In man, the area of the section of the cranium is nearly four times as large as that of the face, three times as large in the ourang-outang, twice as large in the sapajous, and they are nearly equal in the baboons and carnivora. In the hare and marmot, the face exceeds the cranium by one-third, in the porcupine and ruminants, by half. The face is three times as large as the cranium in the hippopotamus, and four times as large in the horse. Professor Lawrence says—"A very striking difference between man and all other animals, consists in the relative proportions of the cranium and face—which are indicated in a general but not very accurate manner, by the facial line. The organs which occupy most of the face, are those of vision, smelling, and tasting, together with the instruments of mastication and deglutition. In proportion as these are more developed, the size of the face, compared to that of the cranium, is augmented. On the contrary, when the brain is large, the volume of the cranium is increased in proportion to that of the face. One of the most simple methods—though often insufficient—of expressing the relative proportion of these parts, is by the course of the facial line, and the amount of the facial angle. The idea of stupidity is associated, even by the vulgar, with the elongation of the snout

—which necessarily lowers the facial line, or renders it more oblique—hence the crane and snipe have become proverbial. On the contrary, when the facial line is elevated by any cause, which does not increase the capacity of the cranium, as in the elephant and owl, by the cells which separate the two tables, the animal acquires a particular air of intelligence, and gains the credit of qualities which he does not in reality possess. Hence the latter animal has been selected as the emblem of the goddess of wisdom—and the former is distinguished in the Malay language by a name which indicates an opinion that he participates with man in his most distinguishing characteristic, the possession of reason." The head of the ourang, viewed in front, is pear-shaped, expanding from the chin upwards, the cranium being much the larger end. The lower jaw is subject to many varieties in the mammalia. In the whale it resembles two enormous ribs, united at the point.

The anterior extremity of the lower animals corresponds to the superior of the human subject, and contains all the elements of it, as shown in the engraving in No. 59, modified according to the habits of the animal. Lawrence remarks, "There is a general resemblance of form throughout the upper and lower extremities—their principal divisions, the number and form of the bones, and the construction of the articulations in each division, correspond very closely—the essential varieties may all be referred to the principles of solidity and resistance in the lower, of mobility in the upper. A comparison of the arm, fore-arm, and hand, to the thigh, leg, and foot—of the os innominatum to the scapula—of the hip, knee, and ankle, to the shoulder, elbow, and wrist—of the carpus, metacarpus, and fingers, to the tarsus, metatarsus, and toes—will at once prove and illustrate this difference." — The importance of the clavicle—so named from its supposed resemblance to an ancient key, *clavicula*, from *clavis*, a key—in the motions of the upper or anterior extremity, may be well estimated by the fact of its being present in those animals only whose habits of life require free and varied motions of the shoulder. Thus in the quadrumana it is strong and curved, as in the human subject. The bat, hedgehog, and mole, among the insectivora, afford examples of clavicle in its highest degree of development. It is very perfect in the rodentia, as the squirrel, beaver, rabbit, rat, &c. Among the edentata, those animals only whose habits are fossorial possess clavicle, as the ant-eater, the dasypus, and the gigantic megatherium—in the last named animal it presents the peculiarity of being articulated with the first rib instead of the sternum. The scapula

forms an essential element of the thoracic extremity, and exists wherever the latter is fully developed, but greatly modified according to the uses to which the extremity is applied. The cetacea or whales, in general, have a large scapula of a triangular form—the pachydermata or thick-skinned animals, ruminantia, and solipeda or solid-feet, have a long, narrow scapula placed perpendicularly on the anterior and lateral part of the chest. In the carnivora and rodentia, where strength and freedom of motion are required, the scapulæ are placed obliquely over the ribs—and it is interesting to observe how the obliquity of the glenoid cavity varies with the motions required. This fact has not escaped the observation of the horse-jockey, who is well aware that the upright shoulder is a mark of a stumbling horse. When the fore-arm and hand are used for seizing objects, as in apes, many rodentia and carnivora, or for flying, as in the bat, the humerus is formed essentially in accordance with the human type. On the contrary, when the anterior part of the member is but slightly developed, as in the cetacea, the bone is short and thick—and in the whalebone whale, it is nearly as broad as it is long. The humerus is the longest and largest bone of the upper extremity, it belongs to the class of long bones, and extends from the scapula to the bones of the fore-arm. In the mole it is short, thick, and strong—its tuberosities greatly developed, and its upper extremity presents two articulating surfaces, one for the scapula, and the other for the clavicle. This large size of the bone prevails in all the other fossorial animals, as the mighty megatherium, the pangolins, beavers, ant-eaters, and monotremata. The humerus of the lion is remarkable for being perforated by the brachial artery and nerve, which prevents its being crushed by the huge and powerful mass of muscles exhibited in this part of the economy of the king of beasts.

WET-BLANKETISM.

SOME men are constitutionally incapacitated, and others constitutionally indisposed, for vigorous, bold, or, it may be, violent action—I have no wish to call things out of their names, and if the appellation of violent be proper, as applied to some of our proceedings, I should call it by no other—a remedy, to be successful, should be commensurate with the disease. Many individuals admire in others what they are not disposed or are unable to accomplish themselves—whilst others, on the contrary, making no allowances for difference of constitution, and consequently of feeling, measure other men's actions by their own standard, decrying as injudicious or violent all that does not square with their notions of

right and wrong. One would almost imagine our correspondent “Omnipax” belonged to one of these two classes, but for the assertion that he felt some difficulty in following out his own advice, being another illustration of the adage, that men are seldom so bad as their principles.

“Omnipax” objects to the course which has been pursued in Holywell-street, and endeavours to show, though in my opinion very lamely, that it has been injurious to the cause of infidelity. After throwing his wet blanket upon our shoulders, “Omnipax” gives us what he is pleased to call a *principle* for our future guidance in attacking religion, the utility of which principle I must beg leave to question, from the impossibility of its ever being made available as a standard, in which the value of a principle consists. He says “that no one has the right, though he may have the power to do so with impunity, to unnecessarily or thoughtlessly hurt the feelings of another”—but the evident folly of the *spirit* of such a proposition, in connection with a struggle for freedom, is so apparent, and would have such a paralysing effect if acted upon, that the writer himself, a few lines further on, admits, “Some persons feelings are so morbidly sensitive, that to attempt to suit ourselves to them, is quite out of the question. A broad demarcation *must* be allowed, but that I think has been widely overstepped lately.” If the feelings of some are so morbidly sensitive, that it would be absurd to try to suit ourselves to them—who is to decide when the feelings of those who are not the subjects of such morbid sensitiveness are “unnecessarily or thoughtlessly hurt?” Wilfully hurt would be the most correct expression, for no one could plead want of thought as an excuse for a premeditated act, and all actions are premeditated which are based upon the assumption of might—whilst, on the other hand, no one could reasonably blame an act which was evidently the result of ignorance or thoughtlessness—regret it they might, but to blame would be to commit an act of greater injustice than the one complained of. Now the only party qualified to give an opinion upon such a subject, is he whose feelings are said to be unnecessarily hurt, and even “Omnipax” must admit that it would be unjust to consult the feelings of one class whilst we treated with contempt another class. If we are to take especial care in one case that we do not hurt feelings—why not in all cases? Every man has an equal claim, in justice, with every other man to have his feelings respected. Admitting for a moment the propriety of “Omnipax's” suggestion, a hatred of cruelty would lead a compassionate man to respect the feelings of the class most sensitively alive to ridicule or opposition, and not the class whose reason to a great extent

governed their feelings, and whose sufferings are, as a consequence, proportionately less.

"Omnipax" says—we cannot very well ask for uncontrolled liberty of discussion, while we show the offensive use we should make of it had we it in our possession. It unfortunately happens for "Omnipax" that no opposition can be offered in discussion of received opinions, which will not be deemed offensive. Every one who has freely discussed received opinions has been charged with making an "offensive use" of the liberty he has taken. This is well known to have been the case with Lord Bacon and logic, Harvey and the circulation of the blood, and all reformers. And it seems severe in "Omnipax" to argue that we forfeit our claim to freedom of expression, because its exercise is deemed offensive by those we oppose. If we forfeit our claim on this ground, every one who enunciates unpopular ideas must do the same, and then no freedom of expression can be claimed by those who most need it. If "Omnipax" means that we make an unjust use of discussion, he is challenged to substantiate his charge. If we are unjust in our exercise of the liberty we claim, we grant it to be presumptive evidence of our unworthiness to possess it. But that we are unjust we challenge "Omnipax" to show. We now use whatever means, upon deliberation, appear most likely to assist us in our object, never losing sight of our principle, that "Honesty is the best policy."

"Omnipax" closes with a bit of deistical claptrap, warning us to take care that we do not by our uncontrolled feelings bring about "a re-action in favour of superstition and priestcraft." Pray what is superstition and priestcraft to re-act upon? are we so happy that these two monsters are matters of history? are they dead and nearly forgotten? Are not men imprisoned, clothed in convict dresses, fed upon bread and water, and put to the treadmill for difference of opinion, and having the honesty to declare that difference? If their influence has really ceased, and naming their names would by any possibility lead, however remotely, to their resuscitation, I would that the man who contemplated the utterance were dead—though he were my dearest friend. But this, alas! is not the case, for millions upon millions are still the degraded slaves of religion and priestcraft, and those who have thrown off their chains will not again, except in a few miserable instances, re-assume them. I believe there never was a general re-action from scepticism to superstition in the world's history. It would be as reasonable for men generally to forsake their comfortable homes, and the blessings of real civilisation, and fly to the deserts to roam as savages—as for men generally when freed from error to wish to return to it.

W. C.

As the following letter from the *Cheltenham Free Press* contains the only account Mr. Holyoake has given of his treatment in Gloucester Gaol, it has been thought likely to interest the readers of the *Oracle*. And it may be useful as a portraiture of christianity's mode of reforming refractory thinkers.

PRISON DISCIPLINE.

MR. EDITOR.—As prisons and prison discipline have lately occupied much public attention, I am induced to offer to your notice a little recent experience in such matters. What I have written, I intended to have stated to a public meeting, but suffering from a debility which makes me glad to avoid excitement—I seek the calmer medium of your paper.

I speak of Gloucester County Gaol. I believe the prison inspector is of opinion that the rules of that place are "*harsh and cruel.*" Now, should a prisoner seek a partial exemption from their operation, the process he goes through is very curious. He applies to a turnkey—the turnkey answers "my duty is determinate and my province clear; I cannot do it." Probably, he refers the prisoner to the surgeon. The surgeon is seen—he refers him to the governor, the governor refers him to the visiting magistrates—they reply, "we have no power to grant the request, Sir James Graham only can do that." Sir James Graham is memorialised, who, as is usual, answers "The visiting magistrates best know what is proper—I only grant what they recommend." Any further application to them would be construed into a wilful annoyance, and the prisoner is fortunate who can sit down like Sterne's happy man—pleased, he knows not *why*, and contented he knows not *wherefore*. Of course I blame no one, for there is no one to blame, and this constitutes the beauty of the system. Should I individualise, it would only be to say, that the governor is a gentleman of some excellent qualities, and of some unintelligible conduct; that the surgeon possesses the *suaviter in modo* WITHOUT the *fortiter in re*; and that the magistrates are little gods, who, like Jupiter, thunder oftener than they smile.

What of health I have, I owe to my friends, who supplied me with such food as my constitution required, for had I been compelled to subsist on the diet of the prison, my health, by this time, would have been quite broken. With the direction of my own medical adviser, I made this representation to the proper authorities at the gaol; I made them to the commissioners who were lately there, and I made them to Sir James Graham; I therefore conceive that I am justified in repeating them here. The surgeon *admitted*

the necessity of better diet, but referred me to the governor, and he sent me the fruitless round I have described. Now the province of the governor was the care of my person, and the province of the surgeon was the care of my health. The governor ought not to have *permitted* the reference to him, and the surgeon ought not to have made it. Either the surgeon should have refused my application with decision, or have allowed it with independence. Upon this subject, the commissioners reminded me, "that if the surgeon did not order what was necessary for my health, he was responsible for it." I replied "that I knew this, and that they also knew, that a prisoner, like Beale of Northleach, must die before he could avail himself of such responsibility, and that this was but *grave* consolation." But of the surgeon I wish to speak impartially, and I gladly admit, that his manner was always very kind, but I complain that his answers were always very indecisive. What he recommended he seldom prescribed, and professed that he must consult the governor when he only should have consulted himself. This fault may seem little, but its effects are great. In a gaol, the surgeon is the only person who stands between a prisoner and the grave, and it is indispensable that to the quality of humanity those of independence and decision should be joined. The kind of answers to which I have alluded were given to me more than once, and given to others as well as to me. And I again repeat, that had I been without friends, I should have left my prison without health.

Akin to the want of better food, was the want of exercise, and *no* want of damp. The yard in which I walked was so small, that I always became giddy, through the frequent turnings, before I became refreshed. The governor sometimes permitted the class in which I was to walk in his garden, but the occasions came seldom and lasted not long—and I was previously so enervated by confinement, that the unusual exercise thus taken, threw me into a slight fever. Generally speaking, the place in which I was confined was miserably humid, and, although I took perpetual care I had almost a perpetual cold.

An application for a trivial favour often brought down upon me ruthless treatment. The visiting magistrates would come and, before the other prisoners, denounce me as the "worst felon in the gaol, and as the most atrocious of criminals." I was directed to ascribe this to the petulance of age and the rancour of orthodoxy, but I thought it proceeded from bad taste and worse feeling.

From first to last, every newspaper sent me was detained; every letter *from* me was perused, and every one *to* me was broken open and read—and the very seals, if they

happened to be heterodox, were interdicted. Thus the privacy of affection and friendship were violated, and mind as well as body laid under one restraint.

When I saw friends it was but for a few minutes, and then through the bars of a gate—to shake hands was a privilege, and to converse unheard—impossible. To me it was a momentary satisfaction made an enduring mortification. To the public it may seem a light matter that nothing can be spoken to a visitor unheard by officers, but it is no light matter to a prisoner. The commissioners inquired—"can you make *no* communication to your friends without its passing under the eyes of the governor, or through the ears of the turnkey." I answered "*none*, and that it was not prudent for a prisoner to mention openly what affected persons in whose power he was put—that no prisoner must calculate on jailers being generous, for they owned few virtues not written in their rules." I spoke from experience, and gave them a case in point.

During the latter portion of my time all my friends were denied access to me, which though it interfered with the supply of my wants, I did not for the reasons stated, much regret. But this I did regret—all my letters were detained, and I was refused the privilege of writing a single letter to my family. The reason assigned by the governor for this, was the enforcement of new rules, but I know that they were enforced without proper authority, and I believe applied only to me.

Those are happy, who are for ever preserved from the reception cells of Gloucester gaol. Of the one in which I was put, the floor was filthy, the bed was filthier, and the window was filthier still, for in the window was what I sicken at as I write—a rag full of human excrement. And of the bed, a prisoner assured me that when he lay in it the lice crept up his throat off the corners of the blanket which covered him. This statement, on my direction, he made to the commissioners.

The gaol chapel is a cold place. Often, on entering it, I have exclaimed with Jurgurtha, on entering his Roman dungeon—"heavens! how cold is this bath of yours!" Yet in this place, during this inclement season, the prisoners are assembled every morning to hear prayers, on empty stomachs, after sixteen hours confinement in their night cells. On the "long prayer" mornings, they are detained in chapel three-quarters of an hour, and the penitentiary men, on their return to their cells, find their gruel on the stone floor, gone cold in their absence. I mention this matter with reluctance, as some may suppose that I notice it only from want of religion, but perhaps a little reflection will convince them that believers, as well as un-

believers, can appreciate a warm breakfast on a cold morning!—And that an asthmatical man, however sound his faith, will have his affection painfully increased by enervation, inanimation, and sudden cold. This practice I do not say, is contrary to the rules, for it would be difficult to say what is or what is not contrary to them, and I never met with any one at the gaol who could tell. But the practice is contrary to the act of the 4th of Geo. 4., chap. 64, sec. 30. which is professed to regulate it.

A circumstance of a different nature from any of the foregoing, I think it my duty to notice. After a considerable portion of my term of imprisonment had elapsed, and after I had memorialised Sir James Graham, I was permitted to remain up in an evening with my books. To this I owe what of pleasure I can be said to have experienced in gaol, and with pleasure I acknowledge it.

I prefer leaving these statements without comment, and content myself with saying, that I can abundantly substantiate every one of them. On Saturday last they were partly examined at the gaol by the magistrates, but I heard nothing that impugned their correctness or affected the propriety of their appearing before the public. If I have made any misrepresentations, I shall be sorry, and what is *proved* to be wrong I will cheerfully retract. I have written from no malevolence, for I feel none—and as what I have related affects me no longer, my only motive is the hope of benefitting the unfortunate beings whom I have left behind me. My object is not, as some may suspect, to excite commiseration on my own part—to do this I have no wish, and no expectation, for in Cheltenham it seems to be a received maxim, that they who have little faith have no feelings—certainly, none are respected.

In concluding this subject, it is perhaps fair to add, that from the feeling in which the new visiting magistrate entered into the examination referred to, I am inclined to believe that such alterations will take place as justice may appear to require and humanity to dictate.

How my imprisonment is supposed to affect me towards religion, I cannot tell, I only know that I have no change of sentiment to own. During six months I have been “shut out from the common light and common air”—from those whom the bonds of friendship connected, and the ties of affection endeared—and some of these ties are broken for ever—for my child, who prattled her artless farewell as I left my home, now lies mouldering in the silent grave. After this, I can only say, that I have greater difficulty than ever in believing that humanity is the associate of piety—and if christianity has no exponents more attractive than those I have fallen in with, the day of my con-

version is still distant, as I do not care to hold what seems to me to require dishonourable support. And I shall be sorry to imbibe principles which will induce me to treat others as christians have treated me.

It was taught to me that the religion of Jesus cherished kindness, that it promoted our best affections, and reclaimed the erring in love. But how is this accomplished in gaol? The man who goes there must leave his affections, his feelings, and his sensibilities behind him—for in gaol all are blighted, deadened, and destroyed. *There* no appeals are made but to coward fears, and no antidote applied to error—but misery. Indeed, I cannot dwell upon christianity's treatment of what she considered my errors, without wishing with Themistocles, that I could learn the art of forgetting. With regard to the cause of my prosecution, I admit that I might be wrong in the sentiments which I held, but I could not be wrong in frankly avowing them. And I may answer to christians, as did Aristides to the tyrant Dionysius—“I am sorry for what you have done, but I am not sorry for what I have said.” Despite all that has succeeded, I still prefer integrity to liberty—for I should be contemptible if I did not. My resolution has long been taken, to speak nothing, or to speak what I think—for

Who dares think one thing, and another tell,
My heart detests him as the gates of hell.

Christians speak what they think useful, and the same privilege ought to be conceded to me. A difference in faith ought not to make a difference in right. But while it does so, those who cannot pronounce the required Shibboleth must arm themselves to bear. Those are poor principles for which a man is unwilling to suffer, when they are in danger. It is an encouraging and gratifying reflection, that though a man's fate may be at others' disposal—his virtue is ever at his own—and, that no enemy can dishonour the man who will not dishonour himself.

Yours' respectfully, G. J. HOLYOAKE.

THEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, *Globe Coffee House, Shoe Lane, Fleet-street*—To inquire into the origin of the Religious Idea—Religious Systems—Modes of Worship—their Origin—Progress—Present State and Prospects—with a view to the discovery and promulgation of Truth, and the overthrow of Error. Every Tuesday evening at half-past eight. Admission Free.

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THE
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Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE."

EDITED FOR THOMAS PATERSON.

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No. 64.]

[PRICE 1D.]

A RECIPROCAL DIALOGUE,

*Between a minister of the blessed gospel and
an Atheist.*

MINISTER.—Are you really an Atheist?

ATHEIST.—Yes.

M.—Do you deny that there is a god?

A.—No. I deny that there is sufficient reason to believe that there is one. There may be a god, but I think it rather unlikely.

M.—I am very glad to find that you have not the temerity to say there is no god.

A.—And I am very sorry to find that you have the temerity to say that there is one. If it would be absurd in me to deny what I could not demonstrate, it is improper for you to assert what you cannot prove.

M.—Then where would you leave the question?

A.—Just where it leaves me. The being of a god is a matter of conjecture, and the evidence in favour of it is probable or improbable. I am inclined to the improbable side.

M.—Ah! (shaking his head) the probabilities in favour of atheism are very few.

A.—How do you know? Did you ever examine the question without prejudice, or read anything that has been written in its favour without fear? Those who dare not look never see far.

M.—But if the Atheist has so much on his side as you would have me infer, why does he not make it known? We don't keep back our evidences.

A.—I repeat again, there is more extant than probably you are aware of—but you forget that the christian is patronised with power, while the Atheist is pursued with death. Applause awaits your doctrines—the dungeon my principles; the wonder is not that you have so much in their favour, rather than that you have not had more.

M.—But you know how horrible your principles are—you know that Robert Hall has said, that "atheism is a bloody and brutal system."

A.—Allow me, sir, to return so gentle a compliment, and tell you that your prin-

ciples are horrible, and that "christianity is a bloody and brutal system." I am a better authority on christianity than Robert Hall is on atheism. I know christianity experimentally—it has robbed me of my liberty. Atheism never did that to Robert Hall.

M.—Really I am quite shocked to hear you speak so dreadfully of christianity.

A.—What! shocked to hear Robert Hall's language on my lips? If I call "christianity a bloody and brutal system," you pretend that it is horrid profanity, blasphemy, or vulgar abuse. Yet you quote such low scurrility of atheism with christian glee. In you it is proper, in me profane.

M.—But atheism is so revolting.

A.—But christianity is so revolting.

M.—But the doctrines of atheism are so absurd.

A.—But the doctrines of christianity are so absurd.

M.—How dangerous is it for your atheistical principles to corrupt the minds of children!

A.—How dangerous is it for your christian doctrines to corrupt the young thoughts of infancy!

M.—But atheism is a pernicious poison.

A.—Christianity is a pernicious poison.

M.—But you are only asserting.

A.—What are you doing? There is, indeed, this difference between us—you can adduce what you call proofs with impunity, but I can only produce them at the expence of my liberty. You object to me asserting when you are broadly asserting yourself. You reproach me for declaiming, and you imprison me for attempting to prove. You call your evidences incontrovertible, but they are only incontrovertible because they are protected by gaolers.

M.—But, my dear sir, the Atheist's language is so shocking to christian feeling.

A.—And, my dear sir, has it never occurred to you that the christian's language is so shocking to Atheist feeling. Yet I have to bear the christian's language, his abuse, and his vengeance.

M.—We don't say Atheists have not a right to hold their sentiments, but we say

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they have no right to publish them, because you see they are so dangerous.

A.—Well, now hear me. We do not say that christians have not a right to hold their sentiments, but we say they have no right to publish them, because you see, sir, they are so dangerous. Remember, sir, if you have a right to publish your sentiments, I have a right to publish mine. You put forth your opinions where you please, and when you please. You instil them into the young and engraft them on the old, and think you are right in so doing. What is fair for you is fair for me, and I will put forth my opinions where I please, how I please, and when I please. I will instil them into young minds, into old minds, or into any minds, and I think that I am right in so doing.

M.—But we have the power to prevent you.

A.—Well, it looks very much like it. But if you have not reason and justice on your side, there may yet be odds against you, Shakspeare says, "Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just." If so, I am better armed than yourself, after all. You may take my liberty, but you cannot take my free thoughts—you may destroy me, but you cannot destroy my opinions. The catholic had power, but he did not destroy protestantism. The protestant has power, but he has not destroyed dissent, and you cannot destroy atheism by policemen. But you may do this, you may destroy christianity in the attempt—and I wish you success in that undertaking.

M.—But you should remember how many men of talent and learning have devoted their time and abilities in the defence of christianity. Such men as Clarke, Paley, Locke, and Newton, thought it worth their while to enlist themselves under the banner of the cross.

A.—In answer to this, I exclaim of such men, as christians sometimes do of my friends—"Pity such talents were not employed in a better cause."

M.—But you can't really be an Atheist.

A.—You can't really be a christian.

M.—Something within must tell you, you are wrong.

A.—You cannot or will not see that I do differ conscientiously and completely from what I consider your egregious errors. And what you think me I think you. It has been too little felt, too little found in practice, that the Infidel has a right to differ, and to proclaim his difference.

M.—When you come to a death-bed, you will wish you were a christian.

A.—Do you mean I shall then wish that I was an unjust and malignant man. A christian enjoys his own opinion, but imprisons the Atheist if he enjoys his. The

christian publishes his doctrines at the point of the bayonet, but incarcerates the Atheist if he opens his mouth. The christian robs his fellow-man of liberty, and, perhaps, of life, because of his difference of opinion. When I die, I hope to look back on generous conduct and just actions, not on injustice and brutality. May I never die the death of the righteous, and may my last end never be like his.

M.—I wish you would examine christianity seriously, you would find it different from what you expect.

A.—Then the Ethiopian has changed its skin since I last was visited by its kindly influence. In truth, I prefer the advice of Paul, which is, "touch not the unclean thing." Christianity is like Jesus's sepulchers, fair outside, but inside full of rottenness and the dead bones of its victims. To speak truly, I have had a surfeit of christian love, and shall not act the unwise part of Eumenes, and put my mind into the power of those who only are masters of my body.

G. J. H.

THOUGHTS ON GOD.

BY ABNER KNEELAND.

OF that being or principle whom christians call god, lord, almighty (and many other names to which I can attach no meaning whatever), I know nothing—and it would be the height of vanity in me even to pretend to have any knowledge on such a subject. Yet I cannot help my thoughts about it. If such a being does actually exist, and knows all things, he knows the sincerity of my heart, and the honesty of my assertions. Whatever may be said of his existence, however, I doubt his having either knowledge or intelligence. For I am sure there can be no knowledge where there is no sense—and I cannot conceive of there being any sense, where there are no organs of sense—and it is not pretended by any one that I know of, that the being called god is an organised being. But on the supposition that such a being does actually exist, what shall I think of him? Now I admit, as I cannot deny the existence of an incomprehensible principle or power, which quickens into life all animated nature, and other living matter, as plants and trees, which power may be called god, for the sake of a name, though I see no necessity for any name for it. For, after all, all that I know of it, or can know of it, is from the things that I behold, and from the facts which I know to exist—for beyond these I know nothing. Judging, therefore, from the things that I see, and from the facts that I know, and taking it for granted that all which I discover has proceeded from god, or from what goddists call god, in some way

or other, or in some sense of the word or the other, I do not think him so good as it is said by some, nor so bad as it is said he is by others, nor half so good as I once thought him to be. Nevertheless, I do not blame him for being no better, nor praise him for being so good, believing, as I do, that whatever he is, he is necessarily what he is, and that he can no more change his own nature than I can change mine.

Either god could have had things better than they are, if he would, but would not—or else he would have had things better than they are, if he could, but could not—or else he is perfectly satisfied with all things as they are. In the first instance, he is deserving no praise—in the second, he is an object of pity rather than blame—but in the third he differs in nothing, that I can perceive, from nature, and being satisfied with himself and with everything else, why should not I be satisfied too? and being satisfied, why should I ask him for anything? I will ask him for nothing, because all the good which he can bestow he does bestow, without my asking. Why should I thank him for anything? For he can no more withhold the good he bestows, admitting him to be perfect and unchangeable, than the sun can withhold its light and heat. And if he would bestow on me any more good than he does, if he could, but cannot, it is as unfortunate for him as it is for me. Therefore, believing in his unchangeability, I can neither praise him nor blame him for being what he is, although I am perfectly satisfied that he should be as he is, even as I am satisfied to be as I am. And the reason I am so satisfied is, perhaps, because I know that while I exist I have no power to be, for the time being, otherwise than as I am.

Hence I can see no object in worshipping god, unless these expressions of satisfaction (which are necessary only as they tend to our own happiness) may be considered worship. These expressions grow out of our own feelings, which feelings constitute our own happiness. Hence it must be obvious that god requires no churches, no temples or public halls, for his own sake—but if properly used, we need them for the sake of ourselves and of our children, and they are necessary for our own improvement and happiness as well as theirs. And the more we promote our own happiness, and the happiness of our species, the more, as I conceive, we act agreeably to the perfection of moral nature, and of course the most agreeably to the will of god, if god has any will—and if he is susceptible of pleasure, the more he must be pleased. God, whoever or whatever he may be, stands in the same relation to all creatures as he does to any, and therefore must equally delight in the happiness of all. These are my views, sentiments, and

feelings, in relation to the being called god, admitting that such a being as god is said to be does actually exist. If they are wrong, I presume he will correct them, if he have any wish that they should be corrected. If he does not correct them, it must be either because he cannot, or will not—or else because they are perfectly indifferent to him. But if the evils and the errors of man are perfectly indifferent to god, notwithstanding he is the father of the human race, is it possible that he is a being of intelligence? Surely, indeed, I think not. If others think differently, however, let them show better reasons for their thoughts than I have shown for mine. But unless, and until, god manifests himself to me, in a way he has never yet done, I shall be under the necessity of still thinking in regard to him (as well as on all other subjects, until I am taught better) as I now do—and shall believe that I am right.

THE FREE INQUIRER'S WHY AND BECAUSE.

WRITTEN BY CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

XIII.

WHY is man said to be “noble in reason, and infinite in faculty?”

Because all that live, move, and have a being, are endowed with organs, through the instrumentality of which they receive what are called sensations. Human beings within the influence of an electrical machine receive a certain sensation called a shock. The shock, which is nothing more than a powerful sensation, is felt in the brain of the person electrified; hence the brain has been called “the organ of the mind,” the sensorium or seat of sensation, “the mind’s presence chamber.” In the case of the person electrified, it has been supposed by some, that the shock is received by some part of the body (say the finger end) and communicated through the agency of nerves to the brain, when the brain is said to be informed or have intelligence of it. This can by no means be admitted, unless we are prepared to maintain that we can experience a shock without ourselves knowing it, which is equivalent to saying, that we can feel without knowing it, that is, feel without feeling—a notion too absurd to need a serious refutation, for, in point of fact, the idea that we feel is the very condition of feeling. Locke, in reply to an objection urged against his assertion, that men could not think without knowing it, seeing that knowing we think is the very condition of thinking, observes, that to think without knowing it is thinking to very little purpose; so we may urge against those who seem to suppose that we can have sensations without being sensible of them, is to

have sensations to very little purpose. Descartes observes, that "to think is to live." Now, all thoughts of a man constitutes his moral being or reason, and are in all cases determined by the organs which compose his body or organisation—their strength, weakness, susceptibilities, and their relation to the external world. In other and, perhaps, plainer terms, the reason, which is the life or moral being of a man, or as it is generally called thinking faculty, is the totality of a man's sensations, which are received, remembered, re-collected, combined, separated, compared, and judged of by the individual who is the subject of them. If it be insisted that the power of choosing between opposite sensations and determining their relative value is a part of reason, distinct from the sensations, themselves, we grant it, but then, the reason of man, or moral energy, so various in various individuals, is determined by the sensations, their force or strength, action and reaction one upon the other. What is called memory or faculty of remembering, or re-collecting, is entirely dependant upon the sensation, we have experienced. A man who has had his leg shattered by a cannon ball, or his house and property destroyed by fire, will not easily forget the sensations he experienced under such trying afflictions. Thoughts connected therewith will occur at intervals, without any wish on his own part, which constitutes remembrance, whereas by an effort of the mind to call up and reflect upon the circumstance, is re-collection. Strictly speaking, we cannot have an idea without feeling, so that the reason of man, as well as other inferior creatures, is but the aggregate of his ideas, which are excited by shocks or sensations. If you were asked how it happens that lovers of art feel so exquisite a thrill of delight, when looking at the pictures of a Raphael, or a Corregio, in the all but speaking figures carved by the chisel of a Phidias, we can give no farther explanation than this, that sensations are excited, as all bodies seem to excite more or less of sensibility in others, and agreeable sensations constitute delight. In such a case ideas are excited and live in the memory, or at all events, may be called up at pleasure. The observations of Pliny, the celebrated ancient naturalist, that god was at once the cause of the universe and the universe itself, is certainly not an opinion very intelligible to orthodox folks—but of ideas it may be truly said that they are at once the cause of reason and reason itself. To speak of reason without ideas would be absurd, ideas of some kind or other we must have, whether true or false, and the difference between the reason of brutes and that of human beings consists in the number, nature, and arrangement of ideas. The old notion of innate ideas has long since given

way, and few will now be found so unwise as to insist that any living creature can possibly reason without sensations and the ideas to which they give birth, any more than we can speak without uttering sounds—reason being nothing more than the power all have, but in various proportions, to choose, combine, separate, remember, re-collect, and reconcile the ideas derived through the instrumentality of the organs, touch, taste, smell, hearing, and sight. We are sometimes said to reason from analogy, as, for example, when we say that if a slip of paper, moistened with spirits of turpentine be immersed in chlorine, it will inflame immediately, and give off much smoke, or if a portion of sodium be thrown on cold water, it will hiss violently, and move on its surface, but does not inflame—in both these cases we assume that what we have seen to happen before must necessarily happen again, presuming as we do, that like causes will produce like effects. So that, having seen that slips of paper moistened with the spirit of turpentine and immersed in chlorine always produced flame, we presume that in time to come the same effects will be produced. In the same way, having seen that the substance called sodium, when thrown on cold water, caused a hissing noise, and moved in a particular manner, we conclude that sodium will always display the same properties. This is called reasoning by analogy, which, as defined by lexicographers, means—resemblances between things with regard to certain circumstances and effects. When we say that before this time to-morrow morning the earth will move from east to west, we speak the truth, that is, we state a fact, but then, it is evident that it is conditionally, and rests upon the assumption that the earth will move as it has hitherto done—we can give no reason for our belief, and all that can be urged is, that analogy, the triumph of experience, warrants us in declaring that the earth will move as it has done through countless ages, and that, as a consequence, day will succeed night as heretofore. We say with confidence, that flame applied to dry wood will speedily consume it, but reasoning *a priori*, or from the cause to the effect, there is nothing would teach us that fire would destroy wood—we perceive, however, that it always does so, which invaluable experience leads us to guard against the many frightful catastrophes which would otherwise take place. Now, then, nine-tenths of our reasoning is analogical, that is, founded upon certain assumptions which are not necessarily true, but upon which we rely with the most implicit confidence, as when we have once experienced that a certain cause has produced a given effect, we are practically certain that the same cause under the same circumstances will always

produce the same effect. When I throw a piece of lead into the air, I assume that it will come down again, but it does not come because I assume that it will—and were it not for our experience, we should not be at all surprised if it never came down again, nay, the wonder would be that it should come down, as we should rather expect that it would fly off into space—for, be it noted, that our down is up at the antipodes (the other end of the globe) and, in fact, the terms up and down have none but a relative meaning, and are sounds without signification when applied to nature. When, however, we reason positively, that is, from positive facts, when the mind once grasps them, it cannot let go of them or see them other than they are, for example, nothing could reconcile us to the idea that a grain of sand is equal in bulk and weight to a heap containing a million of grains, or to the manifest contradiction contained in the assertion that the half is equal to the whole, or that the two halves are not equal to the whole. We hear many people, with more enthusiasm than sense, say that god is everywhere, and in the same breath tell us, that he is not matter—now, it is not only improbable but impossible that any two things, let them be called what they may, matter or spirit, should occupy the same space at the same time, the smallest grain of matter will forever exclude all other existences from the place itself occupies. The many times told tale of the philosopher, who asked the rustic, while wending his way to the parish church, whether his god was big or little? to which question he replied (very unlike a rustic and more like a cheat), that he was both big and little, which staggered the philosopher, who naturally enough asked how that could be? “My god (continued the rustic) is so big that the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, and so little that he can lodge in my heart”—now, either this is figurative, and therefore not to be taken literally, when it is clearly nonsensical gibberish, or it is impossible that a god, that the heaven of heavens cannot hold, should take up his quarters in the breast of a country clown. We only noticed this idle story with a view to illustrate what we mean by a positive fact, which always has this peculiar character, that a denial of it involves a contradiction, and is necessarily false.

(To be continued.)

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PHYSICAL MYTHOLOGY.

BY LORD BACON.

II.

THE FABLE OF PROMETHEUS,

Explained of an over-ruling providence, and of human nature.

EXPLANATION.

MAN, however, in his first origin, seems to be a defenceless, naked creature—slow in assisting himself, and standing in need of numerous things. Prometheus, therefore, hastened to the invention of fire, which supplies and administers to nearly all human uses and necessities—insomuch, that if the soul may be called the form of forms—if the hand may be called the instrument of instruments—fire may, as properly, be called the assistant of assistants, or the helper of helps. For hence proceed numberless operations—hence all the mechanical arts—and hence infinite assistances are afforded to the sciences themselves.

The manner wherein Prometheus stole this fire, is properly described from the nature of the thing—he being said to have done it by applying a rod of birch to the chariot of the sun—for birch is used in striking and beating—which clearly denotes the generation of fire to be from the violent percussions, and collisions of bodies—whereby the matters struck are subtilised, rarified, put into motion, and so prepared to receive the heat of the celestial bodies—whence they, in a clandestine and secret manner, collect and snatch fire, as it were by stealth, from the chariot of the sun.

The next is a remarkable part of the fable—which represents, that men, instead of gratitude and thanks, fell into indignation and expostulation—accusing both Prometheus and his fire to Jupiter; and yet the accusation proved highly pleasing to Jupiter—so that he, for this reason, crowned these benefits of mankind, with a new bounty. Here it may seem strange, that the sin of ingratitude to a creator and benefactor—a sin so heinous as to include almost all others—should meet with approbation and reward. But the allegory has another view—and denotes, that the accusation and arraignment both of human nature, and human art, among mankind, proceeds from a most noble and laudable temper of the mind—and tends to a very good purpose; whereas the contrary temper is odious to the gods, and unbeneficial in itself. For they who break into extravagant praises of human nature, and the arts in vogue, lay themselves out in admiring the things they already possess; and will needs have the sciences cultivated among them, to be thought absolutely perfect

and complete—in the first place, show little regard to the divine nature, whilst they extol their own inventions, almost as high as his perfection. In the next place, men of this temper are unserviceable and prejudicial in life; whilst they imagine themselves already got to the top of things, and there rest, without farther inquiry. On the contrary, they who arraign and accuse both nature and arts, and are always full of complaints against them, not only preserve a more just and modest sense of mind, but are also perpetually stirred up to fresh industry, and new discoveries. Is not, then, the ignorance and fatality of mankind to be extremely pitied, whilst they remain slaves to the arrogance of a few of their own fellows—and are doatingly fond of that scrap of Grecian knowledge, the Peripatetic philosophy; and this to such a degree, as not only to think all accusation or arraignment thereof useless, but even hold it suspect and dangerous? Certainly, the procedure of Empedocles, though furious—but especially that of Democritus (who with great modesty complained that all things were abstruse, that we know nothing, that truth lies hid in deep pits, that falsehood is strangely joined and twisted along with truth, &c.) is to be preferred before the confident, assuming, and dogmatical, school of Aristotle. Mankind are, therefore, to be admonished, that the arraignment of nature, and of art, is pleasing to the gods; and that a sharp and vehement accusation of Prometheus, though a creator, a founder, and a master, obtained new blessings and presents from the divine bounty; and proved more sound and serviceable than a diffusive harangue of praise and gratulation. And let men be assured, that a fond opinion they have already acquired enough, is a principal reason why they have acquired so little.

That the perpetual flower of youth should be the present which mankind received as a reward for their accusation, carries this moral; that the ancients seem not to have despaired of discovering methods, and remedies, for retarding old age, and prolonging the period of human life; but rather reckoned it among those things which, through sloth and want of diligent inquiry, perish and come to nothing, after having been once undertaken, than among such as are absolutely impossible, or not placed within the reach of human power. For they signify, and intimate, from the true use of fire, and the just and strenuous accusation, and conviction of the errors of art, that the divine bounty is not wanting to men in such kind of presents, but that men indeed are wanting to themselves; and lay such an inestimable gift upon the back of a slow-paced ass: that is, upon the back of the heavy, dull, lingering thing, experience; from whose sluggish and tortoise-pace

proceeds that ancient complaint of the shortness of life, and the slow advancement of arts. And certainly it may well seem, that the two faculties of reasoning and experience, are not hitherto properly joined, and coupled together; but to be still new gifts of the gods, separately laid, the one upon the back of a light bird, or abstract philosophy; and the other upon an ass, or slow-paced practice and trial. And yet good hopes might be conceived of this ass; if it were not for his thirst, and the accidents of the way. For we judge, that if any one would constantly proceed, by a certain law and method, in the road of experience; and not by the way, thirst after such experiments as make for profit or ostentation; nor exchange his burden, or quit the original design, for the sake of those; he might be an useful bearer of a new accumulated divine bounty to mankind.

That this gift of perpetual youth should pass from men to serpents, seems added by way of ornament, and illustration to the fable; perhaps, intimating, at the same time, the shame it is for men, that they, with their fire, and numerous arts, cannot procure to themselves those things which nature has bestowed upon many other creatures.

The sudden reconciliation of Prometheus to mankind, after being disappointed of their hopes, contains a prudent and useful admonition. It points out the levity and temerity of men in new experiments; which, not presently succeeding, or answering to expectation, men precipitantly quit their new undertakings, hurry back to their old ones, and grow reconciled thereto.

After the fable has described the state of man, with regard to arts and intellectual matters, it passes on to religion: for after the inventing and settling of arts, follows the establishment of divine worship; which hypocrisy presently enters into, and corrupts. So that by the two sacrifices we have elegantly painted the person of a man truly religious, and of an hypocrite. One of these sacrifices contained the fat, or the portion of god, used for burning and incensing; thereby denoting affection and zeal, incensed up to his glory. It likewise contained the bowels, which are expressive of charity; along with the good and useful flesh. But the other contained nothing more than dry bones; which nevertheless stuffed out the hide, so as to make it resemble a fair, beautiful, and magnificent sacrifice; hereby freely denoting the external and empty rites and barren ceremonies, wherewith men burden and stuff out the divine worship: things rather intended for show and ostentation, than conducing to piety. Nor are mankind simply content with this mock-worship of god, but also impose and father it upon him, as if he had chose and ordained it. Certainly the prophet, in the person of god, has a fine expos-

tulation, as to this matter of choice. Is this the fasting which I have chosen, that a man should afflict his soul for a day; and bow down his head like a bulrush?

After thus touching the state of religion, the fable next turns to manners, and the conditions of human life. And though it be a very common, yet is it a just interpretation, that Pandora denotes the pleasures and licentiousness, which the cultivation and luxury of the arts of civil life introduce, as it were, by the instrumental efficacy of fire; whence the works of the voluptuary arts are properly attributed to Vulcan, the god of fire. And hence infinite miseries and calamities have proceeded to the minds, the bodies, and the fortunes of men, together with a late repentance; and this not only in each man's particular, but also in kingdoms and states: for wars and tumults, and tyrannies, have all arisen from this same fountain, or box of Pandora.

It is worth observing, how beautiful and elegantly, the fable has drawn two reigning characters in human life; and given two examples, or tablatures of them, under the persons of Prometheus, and Epimetheus. The followers of Epimetheus are improvident; see not far before them; and prefer such things as are agreeable for the present; whence they are oppressed with numerous straits, difficulties, and calamities; with which they almost continually struggle: but in the mean time gratify their own temper; and, for want of a better knowledge of things, feed their minds with many vain hopes: and as with so many pleasing dreams, delight themselves, and sweeten the miseries of life.

But the followers of Prometheus are the prudent, wary men, that look into futurity, and cautiously guard against, prevent, and undermine many calamities and misfortunes. But this watchful provident temper is attended with a deprivation of numerous pleasures, and the loss of various delights; whilst such men debar themselves the use even of innocent things; and what is still worse, rack and torture themselves with cares, fears, and disquiets; being bound fast to the pillar of necessity, and tormented with numberless thoughts (which for their swiftness are well compared to an eagle) that continually wound, tear, and gnaw their liver, or mind, unless, perhaps, they find some small emission by intervals, or as it were at nights; but then new anxieties, dreads, and fears, soon return again, as it were in the morning. And therefore, very few men, of either temper, have secured to themselves the advantages of prudence, and kept clear of disquiets, troubles, and misfortunes.

Nor indeed can any man obtain this end, without the assistance of Hercules; that is, of such fortitude and constancy of mind, as

stands prepared against every event, and remains indifferent to every change; looking forward without being daunted; enjoying the good without disdain; and enduring the bad without impatience. And it must be observed, that even Prometheus had not the power to free himself; but owed his deliverance to another: for no natural, imbred force and fortitude could prove equal to such a task. The power of releasing him came from the utmost confines of the ocean, and from the sun; that is, from Apollo, or knowledge; and again, from a due consideration of the uncertainty, instability, and fluctuating state of human life; which is aptly represented by sailing the ocean. Accordingly Virgil has prudently joined these two together; accounting him happy who knows the causes of things, and has conquered all his fears, apprehensions, and superstitions.

It is added, with great elegance, for supporting and confirming the human mind, that the great hero who thus delivered him, sailed the ocean in a cup or pitcher; to prevent the fear, or complaint, as if, through the narrowness of our nature, or a too great fragility thereof, we were absolutely incapable of that fortitude and constancy, to which Seneca finely alludes, when he says, "It is a noble thing, at once to participate the frailty of man, and the security of a god."

We have hitherto, that we might not break the connexion of things, designedly omitted the last crime of Prometheus, that of attempting the chastity of Minerva; which heinous offence it doubtless was that caused the punishment of having his liver gnawed by the vulture. The meaning seems to be this; that when men are puffed up with arts and knowledge, they often try to subdue even the divine wisdom; and bring it under the dominion of sense and reason: whence inevitably follows a perpetual, and restless, rending and tearing of the mind. A sober and humble distinction must, therefore, be made betwixt divine and human things; and betwixt the oracles of sense and faith; unless mankind had rather chuse an heretical religion, and a fictitious and romantic philosophy.

The last particular in the fable is the games of the torch, instituted to Prometheus; which again relates to arts and sciences, as well as the invention of fire, for the commemoration and celebration whereof, these games were held. And here we have an extremely prudent admonition, directing us to expect the perfection of the sciences from succession; and not from the swiftness and abilities of any single person: for he who is fleetest and strongest in the course, may perhaps be less fit to keep his torch alight, since there is danger of its going out from too rapid, as well as from too slow a motion. But this kind of contest with the torch seems

to have been long dropt, and neglected; the sciences appearing to have flourished principally in their first authors, as Aristotle, Galen, Euclid, Ptolemy, &c. whilst their successors have done very little, or scarce made any attempts. But it were highly to be wished, that these games might be renewed, to the honour of Prometheus, or human nature; and that they might excite contest, emulation, and laudable endeavours; and the design meet with such success, as not to hang tottering, tremulous, and hazarded, upon the torch of any single person. Mankind, therefore, should be admonished to rouse themselves, and try and exert their own strength and chance; and not place all their dependance upon a few men, whose abilities and capacities, perhaps, are not greater than their own.

IS THERE A GOD?

To the Editor of the Oracle of Reason.

A WRITER under this head, in No. 39, states that Origen Bachelier, in his discussion with Robert Dale Owen, demanded "what branch of modern science *proves* the non-existence of witches?" to which R. D. O. replied by another question, "What branch of modern science proves the impossibility of men walking about in the moon, with their heads under their arms?" Still, observes your correspondent, the question was unanswered, and why, "because it cannot be answered." Now a little more light would here be very acceptable—the question is said to be unanswered because it *cannot* be answered, but, in the first place, is it a question? Is any question actually put? R. D. O. might well enough think to pass the language by, as too self-evidently ridiculous to be heeded, but when he found the astute Origen give him a second challenge to get over *that* if he could, the reply should have been, "define me *witchcraft*, and I will then apply myself to your inquiry—point out to me, from amongst your various crafts, the identical one you call *witchcraft*. Say what is *witchcraft*, and I will then apply myself to see how far modern science *proves* or is *required* to prove its impossibility." But was ever absurdity more monstrous amid discussion so grave? Let Atheists rejoice that it is the deity-champion who thus seeks for aid even from the last floating and long since rotten straw of *witchcraft*. Perhaps, too, we may profit by another suggestion or two naturally arising out of the subject. We may observe how easy it is to be misled by terms and technicalities. The writer in No. 39 (far more than my equal in point of argumentative and critical talent) is yet thrown out, as it were, by allowing this same *witchcraft* to pass muster as an accepted word of comprehensible meaning and application. So, it would seem, did

R. D. O., and hence, it should seem, also, that false or imperfect conclusions are allowed place amongst company to which they never did or ever ought to belong. Priestcraft is a term pretty well and pretty dearly, aye, and pretty *cruelly* understood. No one hesitates or doubts, when the craft of the priest is introduced, whether it be in a discussion, or (more insiduously) into our cupboards and pockets, or through the medium of policemen or jailers—but the craft of the witches, forsooth! who but a goddite would admit this into the region of his entities? Bachelier's inquiry embodies the beggarly proposition, "there may be a witch," ergo, "there may be a god," and straightway follows the question, "what is a witch—what is a god?" And with the latter half of this question ought Owen's celebrated discussion to have commenced. And this reduces the case to a very simple bearing, indeed, and one worthy, perhaps, to be a text in each succeeding number of the *Oracle*. For the modest goddites must either admit that they do or do not comprehend that whereof they are professing to argue. If they *do* comprehend, away goes their incomprehensible deity. If they *do not* comprehend, away goes their baby trash about they *don't know what!* As well might I, whose learned lore never extended beyond a Cobbett's spelling book—as well might I pretend to discuss and discourse upon Greek or Latin idioms, as for these clever personages to teach creeds and dictate opinions upon that which they do not comprehend, and of which they are therefore in ignorance. G.

SUBSCRIPTIONS,

For the Anti-Persecution Union.

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M. RYALL, Sec.

RELEASE OF MR. SOUTHWELL.

A General Meeting of the Shareholders will be held in the Coffee Room of the John-street Institution on Monday, March 6th, for the purpose of receiving Tickets which may not be sold, and making general arrangements, for the Performance the next evening, when the doors of the Rotunda will be open at half-past six, the performance to commence at 7, precisely.

R. REDBURN, Sec.

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Saturday, March 4, 1843.

THE ORACLE OF REASON:

Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

“ FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE.”

EDITED FOR THOMAS PATERSON.

No. 65.] Originally Edited by CHARLES SOUTHWELL, sentenced, on January 15, 1842,
to Twelve Months' Imprisonment in Bristol Gaol, and to pay a fine of £100, [PRICE 1d.
for Blasphemy, contained in No. 4.
Second Editor, G. J. HOLYOAKE, sentenced, on August 15, 1842, to Six Months'
Imprisonment in Gloucester Gaol, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.

TO THE ATHEISTS AND REPUBLICANS OF GREAT BRITAIN.

DEAR FRIENDS.—I was released from durance *honorable* on Monday, the 6th ult., and had I not stood pledged to those generous friends who effected that release, not to write or say anything which might by possibility have compromised myself, until every copper of their moneys was returned, I should have addressed you a fortnight ago. Being now once more entirely at my own disposal, it is incumbent on me, at this crisis, to state explicitly and manfully the course I am prepared to pursue.

Before, however, proceeding to make this statement, it is fitting I say something about the *character* and *effects* of my thirteen months close, isolated confinement, in Bristol Gaol—it is proper, moreover, that I say something about the treatment I experienced.

It will be but little I shall have to write about the latter, but that little *ought* to be written, as, with *one* exception, there is not an individual functionary in that gaol of whose conduct I have the slightest reason to complain—on the contrary, with the single exception I have named, I had abundant cause to congratulate myself on having fallen into good hands, and to that exception I shall presently more particularly allude. It is true there was no setting aside, or even relaxation of those sufficiently stringent rules, which applied to me as prisoner of the first-class—but every one knows, and every person *feels*, that punishments even the most severe, when administered in a spirit of kindness, lose more than half their sting. It is always in the power of a gaol governor, if *disposed*, to act the tyrant, and play off those “fantastic tricks” men, “dressed in a little brief authority,” are so prone to exhibit—to incessantly and seriously annoy a prisoner, without leaving the victim room *legally* to complain, or the shadow of material, out of which a charge of cruelty, or undue severity in the application of those rules by which all governors of prisons are *professedly* guided, might be constructed.

Of Mr. Gardner, the governor of Bristol

gaol, I have no complaint to make whatever, moral or legal—but much, very much to thank him for, as I ever found him disposed to do me all the good he dared or could do, consistently with the performance of his duty towards the public.

As to the gaolers, I have reason to know that when I first entered the prison they hated me with a genuine christian hatred, but long before I left the prison they were all my very best of friends. I affirm as strictly true, that at first my gaolers thought, and treated, me, as a suspiciously fearful character, a horrible fellow, with no more religion in him than a dog—one of those desperate and most unfortunate individuals who delight in nothing else save rapes, robberies, and murders, because they won't believe that people are to be roasted *ad eternam*, in some other world for the crimes they commit in this. It is strictly true, besides, that, with the sole exceptions of governor and chaplain, none of those employed about the prison are now so satisfactorily orthodox as they were fourteen months ago. The very fact of an avowed opponent of all religion being daily before their eyes, was sufficient to set them a thinking. But this is no business of mine—if those in authority are so execrably idiotic, as to hunt men into prison because they dare express heterodox opinions, why, the consequences of such folly, it is for them, not their intended victims, to answer for.

Were my conduct regulated by personal feeling, rather than by what is due to truth and the public interest, I should pass over, as totally unworthy of notice, certain circumstances in connection with my treatment which occurred during my incarceration. I have already lauded, *willingly* lauded, every officer of the prison, save *one*, whose conduct upon several occasions I conceive to have been not only *exceptional*, but altogether *abominable*—that officer is the gaol chaplain, a Rev. Mr. Jennings. Of his opinions I say nothing, all I care now to consider, or rather expose, is his treatment of me while a prisoner, and, to a certain extent, at his mercy. Before my trial he gave me a very bitter taste of his quality, in refusing to allow me those books which I told him, again and

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again, were necessary, as aids in my defence. So stupid was his bigotry, that he could not, he said, consistently with his duty as a christian clergyman, allow me "Seneca's Morals," because, forsooth, the translator of that splendid book had hinted in his preface that it was not perfect—likening it to a garden, where poisonous weeds, and flowers the most deliciously luxuriant grow together. In vain I put it to him that the bible he so anxiously thrust into my hands was a very fair, a much fairer specimen, than Seneca's Morals, of *such* a garden, and that to be consistent, if he denied me Seneca upon such grounds, he should forbid me the use of the bible also.

I have an ample budget of such evidence of his shocking bigotry, but this one is, I conceive, amply sufficient to stamp in the reader's thoughts the character of the man. As chaplain of the gaol, he had an undoubted right to deny or allow me those books without which I had no means whatever of effectually defending myself against the charges brought against me. But we live in a state of society so radically unjust and absurd, as well as wickedly anomalous, that the veriest slave has the *right* to do much more than any man *ought* to do. Such is the vicious constitution of society, that the virtuous man cannot hope to remain virtuous, save by mortifying his desire to act, when such action, though good for him, tends to the misery of his neighbour. The virtuous man is beset by multitudinous temptations to enjoy that which he may enjoy, if he please, but which enjoyment he knows involves the rights and privileges of his fellow-creatures. But who ever saw, or heard of, a virtuous religious bigot? Who ever knew an Atheist or irreligious man of any description receive from the hands of conscientious christians in authority *generous* or even just treatment? Talk of the humanising influence of religion, when its professors, aye, and its sincere professors, too, are thus uniformly unjust. The reverend chaplain of Bristol gaol *I know to be a sincerely religious man*—a sincere believer in the least believable dogmas—a conscientious defender of things and principles least defensible. I know him, also, to be thoroughly hypocritical, belonging to that very dangerous class of hypocrites who don't know they are hypocrites—filled with pride, yet rating and fancying himself humble—one of the most intolerant of men, yet fully convinced he is walking that *charitable* path Christ is said to have walked before him—though a classical scholar, having less practical and useful knowledge, less appreciation of the beautiful in human and universal nature, than the most humble sceptical dunce I ever met with. Such a man Bishop Warburton must have had in his eye, when he said, "There are some men who have no

weak side of common sense whereat to attack them." I can honestly say, that during the thirteen, or rather fourteen, months I had the almost daily opportunity of probing the rev. chaplain of Bristol gaol, I never could succeed in discovering a single inch of common-sense that I might fall to the attack of.

It pains me to write thus, but it would pain me much more to hold back the truth, or to veil it—and as to dealing tenderly with the feelings of others, I shall be a warm convert to that doctrine when I find that those who can well afford to be generous, are not utterly reckless in dealing with mine. When the reverend chaplain did all he could to starve my intellect, to prevent me, while enduring the inconvenience and miseries of close imprisonment, receiving those books which were to me a necessary of happiness, if not of existence, when he hinted in his report, published some five months since in the *Bristol Mercury*, that my obstinate adherence to atheistical principles, and his own want of success in either convincing my judgment as to the utility or rationality of christian doctrine and christian practice, arose from my being allowed *too much liberty*, he consulted not *my* feelings, nor did he act upon the principles of common decency or common honesty. The fact is, I left Bristol gaol more completely and decidedly heterodox than I entered it—a certain consequence of the very gross absurdities the chaplain thought it his duty to treat me with. Had I gone *in* a Deist, I am firmly convinced his reasonings would have turned me *out* an Atheist—and as to the *moralising* influence of the prayers and discourses with which he every day treats the unfortunate prisoners, I am altogether sceptical. Indeed, the conclusion to which I have arrived as to such prayers and discourses is simply this, that so long as prisoners shall be compelled to listen to them, so long will they remain vicious, degraded, and miserable.

I have neither leisure nor space to notice much that is in itself interesting relative to my prison experience, but I cannot dismiss this part of my subject without relating an anecdote or two highly illustrative of the cant, folly, and impudent intolerance of unprofessional as well as professional christians.

Though my trial created an immense sensation in Bristol, and of course it was well known that I was confined in the gaol of that city, not one member of the clerical profession honored me by a visit. Not a single professional christian made the slightest attempt to "save my soul," or even relieve my body—notwithstanding my anxiety, often expressed to the governor, chaplain, and other parties, to see anybody likely to cure me of the reasoning disease they as-

sured me I was the victim of. It was all in vain—my hints were disregarded, my wishes ungratified. Had I been suffering from cholera morbus, or any other species of plague, I could have understood why even physicians should have no desire to come in contact with me—but when I reflected that the greater the sinner the greater the saint—when I called to mind the express scripture statement about more joy being in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just men, I was thoroughly astonished, or rather bewildered by the inconsistency of Bristol parsons, in letting so favourable an opportunity slip of causing joy in heaven, by converting, so terrible a sinner as they freely allow me to be.

It happened, however, that, in the course of last summer the chaplain was called into a distant part of the country, for about three weeks, and luckily, as I thought, his gaol duties were performed during his absence by some five or six of his clerical friends. One visit from each of these gentlemen I was favored with, but though the whole of them, I believe, came to the prison more than once, I never saw either of them in my cell a second time. It was not that I failed in politeness, for my politeness upon all occasions amounted to the excessive, and was much admired. It was not that I failed to invite them to a second tête-à-tête, by no means—I urged, with all the vehemence of a man satiated of solitude, who, rather than remain alone, would take hyenas for companions, how delighted I should be again to see them, and how perfectly willing I was to get rid of my, to them, noxious opinions, if they would but take the trouble to prove them noxious—in short, all that man could do to induce these parsons to visit, commune, and discuss with me in a friendly manner, I did, but no, there was something in me they could not stomach. *Shylock* truly says, some men there are love not a gaping pig, some that are mad when they behold a cat, and some, it may be added, who abhor the presence, and scarce can tolerate the existence of those who differ from them in opinion, to which last class, or some such, I am obliged to consider this batch of soul curers belonged.

It is worth relating that one of this curious half-dozen, after talking with me upon various subjects, for the space of an hour, suddenly placed a hand upon either shoulder, and staring me full in the face, said, “young man, let me impress upon you one fact, which at present you are entirely ignorant of—you are mad.” I started a little, when he continued, “I don’t mean that you are altogether or entirely mad—no, it is only one string of your intellect is snapped—yes, sir, be assured one string of your intellect is snapped.”

This was a startler, a statement anything

but convincing, but still difficult to meet, and calling for refutation most delicate. I did not attempt so delicate a business, and luckily I think, shuffled, vulgarly, *choked off* the parson, by saying that I did not remember to have met with, heard, or read of a madman who ever honestly acknowledged, or even knew, that he was mad, and then I told him the oft told anecdote of a certain lunatic who, when asked what brought him to a madhouse, sagely answered, “I said the world was mad, the world said I was mad, but the world being the stronger of the two, clapped me here.”

About ten months ago, an unprofessional christian who styled himself James Stevenson Blackwood, applied to the chaplain, for permission to see me, with a view to my conversion, or, at all events, with the certain result, any way, of so stating and proving the truth of christianity, as to leave me without excuse for remaining in unbelief. Before granting his permission, the chaplain very properly wished to know if I had any objection to see Mr. Blackwood, when I told him, not the smallest in the world—indeed I added, so far from objecting to see that Gentleman, nothing would gratify me more than an opportunity to receive instruction from, or compare opinions with, any intelligent or intelligible party or parties, always provided our conversations were conducted in a friendly, pleasant spirit.

To give anything like the merest outline of all that passed, between myself and James Stevenson Blackwood, would tire me and perhaps nauseate my readers, so I shall content myself by simply stating, that we met three times, and at the last meeting, agreed that a friendly, regular, and philosophic correspondence, as Mr. B. was about to leave Bristol for Dublin, should be regularly kept up. What I am now about to quote is from his second letter, dated April 20, 1842, sent in reply to one of mine, written a few days previously, and I owe it to myself to say, was couched in language as friendly and little offensive as can well be conceived:—

“Your letter gives me pain. It is painful in a hospital to behold disease which you cannot remedy or alleviate—Could I hope to render you a service, I should not regard the pain I feel in the discharge of a christian duty. As I cannot, however, transgress with any hope of good effect, the apostolic precept, which is to me an infallible rule, I shall with this letter, cease corresponding with you, unless you should desire instruction.... Believe me, sir, you have taken up at second hand, cast-off clothes of often refuted sinners against their own souls. You are not an atheist—You are a superstitious theist—you fear and tremble before an unknown god, and I should not be surprised to see you a papist.... You will leave Bristol gaol either as a corpse with

your feet foremost—or you will leave it a convinced, converted sinner, a monument of the grace of god, or you will leave it, after all efforts, and after the space of repentance afforded you, a miserable wretch given over to a reprobate mind."

Such are a few samples of the *friendly* letter, written doubtless with a view to my benefit, by this *modest* personage. A more impertinent, insulting production I never read, and certainly no such trash would ever have been put in print by me, were I not desirous to illustrate, by excellent examples, the vindictiveness, the self-sufficiency, and shallow impertinence generated by religious education. Here is a gentleman of talents, and I am told ample fortune, a barrister by profession, and *soi disant* christian, doctrinally, preceptively, and practically, who forgets the common decencies of life, the respect that even the humblest pay to the humblest—who affects the candour of humility, that he may securely indulge the malice of pride, presumes to pronounce what he dares call the terrible judgments of a god, upon the head of a man who never injured him even in thought, a man who was not known as otherwise criminal, than in sincerely speaking his sincere thoughts—a man who, at the very moment those bitter words were written, was the tenant of a wretched cell, a sufferer in defence of those principles *he* deemed true, and of those practises which *he* deemed just and useful. A really good man could as soon chop his right hand off as write such a letter, at such a time, and under such circumstances. Was it not enough that I was cast into prison, that I was denied for thirteen dreary months common light, common air, and common social intercourse? Was it not enough that I should endure what law, not justice, compelled me to endure? but that a virpous thing calling itself a christian barrister, should spurt its venom upon me, and taking advantage of my courtesy and confidence, add personal insult to legal villany. Never was there more of insult, of bitter malignity, and disgusting intolerance, than is crowded into that one sentence—“*You will leave Bristol Gaol as a corpse, with your feet foremost!*” And let those doubt who can, that the wretch who wrote it, heartily wished *I might* so leave it.

As I did not leave Bristol Gaol a corpse with my feet foremost, and as I am not a convinced, converted, or saved sinner, consequently not a monument of the grace of god—why, if James Stevenson Blackwood be a true prophet, I am a miserable wretch given over to a reprobate mind. One fact is certain, and worth stating, namely, that *I am at this moment more than ever satisfied as to the general truth and immense usefulness of all those opinions, for the publication*

of which I was sent to prison. My prison reflections, my prison researches, my prison personal and positive experience, together with the stirring events of the last twelve months, have so thoroughly hardened me in unbelief, that I verily believe there is no power on earth can alter me; nor no fear of consequences, no love either of applause or profit, can turn me aside from the bold, honourable, and eminently useful course I have determined to pursue. I tell the clergy of this country, and I tell theirs and the nation's masters, the aristocracy, that so long as I can wield a pen or move a tongue, I will practically assert individual right to express individual opinion upon any and every subject of human inquiry. Nothing short of a thorough revolution in my very nature, could reconcile me to a passive, cowardly acquiescence, in the present corrupt state of human action.

If disposed to shake off the odium now so firmly attached to my name, to barter principle for profit, and the pleasurable sense of acting rightly for the miserable reward, a sense of safety, and a sense of security from want is competent to afford, I could easily have done so during the last twelve months, aye, and been mightily applauded too, for such *useful* baseness. Nothing more was necessary on *my* part than a few words of the right sort; and words everybody knows, cost but little. To *cant*, if I could not sincerely *recant* was to be my only labour, in the work of building up anew my broken fortunes. Cantation, be it observed, is one thing—recantation another; to do the latter at will, is by no means an easy task, as it implies a change of *opinion* as well as of *language*. Now, though the will doth, as Lord Bacon long ago asserted, coax the understanding, it is, nevertheless, seldom the case, that the man who is tempted by a bribe to change his opinions, can be so far coaxed by the bribe, as really to change them. No mule in the world ever was more obstinate than human understanding, when it desires to think known falsehood, proved truth. Cudgelling the brains is rarely to much purpose under such circumstances, so that to recant in a hurry, is a task by no means so easy as is commonly imagined; whereas, to cant is any man's work, who may be deeply interested in canting.

These reflections lead me, by a natural and easy transition, to considerations of my future proceedings, the wisdom or folly of which will touch *you* more nearly. It is now necessary I should fully and explicitly state why it has been determined the *Oracle* is still to speak, “shake orthodoxy's rotten bones, and make priests tremble,” by the tongues of my friends rather than my own.

Those among you who watched our strug-

gle with the priestarchy of this nation—those among you who see the signs of the times, must know that two distinct paths, leading, however, to the same wished for goal, now lie before me. Both these paths are rough, thorny, and dangerous—not, however, equally dangerous, though equally honest. One of these roads I have already travelled, and that it *was* dangerous is beyond dispute—that it was incalculably useful I now more than ever am fully persuaded. The *Oracle* spoke on purpose to startle human prejudices, but than human prejudices there is nothing more dangerous, though nothing more useful, to startle.

I think, another step in the right direction has now to be taken, and therefore I have determined to leave those friends, whose abilities and sincerity I am fully assured of, the duty of working the *Oracle*, and apply all my energies to the task of establishing another weekly paper, whose principles will be as clear, whose honesty as undoubted, whose warfare with every kind of craft, no less unflinching, but whose *style* and *general character* will be altogether different.

There are some people so bad-sighted as not to perceive the essential distinction between a mere change of mode and a change of principle, who confound a change of tactics with a change of opinions. By such, until my new paper appears, I expect to be condemned—indeed I have already been found guilty by “troops of friends,” before they could possibly have known the character of my new policy, or the reason which led me to adopt it. Lord Brougham said, upon the occasion of Queen Caroline’s trial, *he* was the worst of all fools who consulted his *apparent* consistency, at the expense of certain ruin—and who will deny that *such* a piece of human consistency might be justly designated as the worst of all fools. Consistency is one matter—*apparent* consistency another, and its very opposite—the first, no honest politician, no man who holds the esteem of right thinking men, the chief good, will recklessly part with—but let us not, if we would think and act wisely, liken unlike principles, or mistake for realities, things less than the dream of a shadow. The general who should insist upon attacking his enemy under *all* circumstances in the very *same* manner, who should persist in putting his troops in the same position, and furnishing them with the same weapons, utterly careless of the ground chosen by, or the new moves of those with whom they were to combat—would, I imagine, be a sorry sort of commander-in-chief. If victorious at all, it would rather be by accident than design—a freak of lady fortune, not an achievement well conceived and judiciously executed. Now, it seems to me, that the political leader who, with his scanty army, battles honestly against the common

enemies of peace and liberty, is not very differently placed, or should not act upon entirely different principles from those which regulate the operations of an experienced general at the head of his battalions, since the man who attacks powerful tyranny may be allowed to change either his ground of attack, his weapons, or even the whole plan of his campaign, *if a change of circumstances imperatively call for a change in his mode of operation*. The *modus operandi* is often mere question of detail, and where it involves no truth, inconsistency, no honour, is *in itself* considered a question entirely secondary if not altogether unimportant.

I propose to start a new paper, new in name, new in matter, new in manner, new in everything save truth, fullness, devotion to principles and unflinching reasoning. Its name will be *The Investigator*, its principle is implied by the name, its details will harmonise with that principle; its grand aim the fearless, candid, and complete statement of all curious or forbidden opinions—political, moral, and religious. I say *statement*, as ’tis my intention, so far as practicable, to collect facts and authorities relative to the subjects treated, rather than confidently to pronounce upon them—to lay down well digested *premises*, leaving to readers the task of drawing their own conclusions.

The judges of the land have protested against invective, banter, ridicule, or satire, on the part of those who discuss *serious* questions of politics or religion. Sir Nicholas Tindal, during the late special commissions, warned all parties against dealing with important questions, *especially* sacred questions, in “a sprightly or facetious manner.” According to this learned judge, the law does not war with argument, against whatsoever opinions directed—only with a sprightly manner of stating it, which he thinks never can be tolerated. Any man, in the view of this learned judge, may reason upon subjects, sacred or profane, religious or irreligious, but there must be no doit of facetiousness or levity in his logic. If the authority of Sir Nicholas Tindal be worth anything, weeping philosophers may write freely upon any subject, however sacred—but as to laughing philosophers, or philosophers who make other folks laugh, they must lay their account with prosecution, unless they keep clear of politics and religion. What odd notions must such a judge have of the liberty of the press, and the liberty of the subject.

As, however, all the judges say, we may reason and argue for or against any set of opinion, religious or anti-religious, political, social or moral, why ’twill be useful to put their sincerity to the test, and I propose that the *Investigator* shall be the means of doing this. In that paper, nothing save

close reasoning and solid argument shall find entrance. The judges call for serious reasonings and sober argumentation. They shall have both, perhaps more of both than any of them really desire. I say perhaps, for 'twould not be proper to prejudge them—and to do the judges of this land simple justice, they have, individually and collectively, almost uniformly objected to levity, banter, or ridicule, in the consideration of, or rather attacks upon religious opinions. Mr. Justice Bailey, said, in 1824, upon occasion of the trial of William Tunbridge “for the publication of a blasphemous libel,” “The ground upon which the court proceeds is this—although it is legal for any man, temperately and decorously, to examine and discuss the evidences of the christian religion, yet it is not competent for any man to villify and abuse it.” Lord Chief Justice Abbott said, in 1820, just before pronouncing sentence upon the Rev. Robert Wedderburn, convicted by a special jury of blasphemy, “The defendant has put in a defence which I must acknowledge is exceedingly well drawn up, and the sentiments and reasoning, as far as applies to persecution on the ground of religion, are particularly just—but the defendant was not charged here with entertaining this or that opinion, but with openly reviling that religion which was identified with, and the foundation of, all the administration of justice in the country.” Lord Denman was even more explicit than either of the foregoing upon this curious question. I allude to his summing up the case of Mr. Hetherington, who, on the 8th of December, 1840, was tried on an indictment at the court of Queen's Bench, for selling one of “Haslams Letters to the Clergy,” said to contain blasphemous matter. The learned lord, after stating that he “has listened to the defendant's defence with feelings of great interest, aye, with sentiments of respect, too,” afterwards proceeded to say, “Discussions on a subject, even the most sacred, might be tolerated when they were conducted in a fair spirit—but when appeals were made, not to reason but to the bad feelings of human nature, or where ridicule or invective were had recourse to, it could not be considered discussion.” Even Sir Charles Wetherall, in the course of one of the bitterest and most unfair speeches that ever fell from the lips of a judge, put in a claim to liberality on the part of my prosecutors. The prosecutors, said he, are free from any imputation of desiring to suppress any fair discussion on theological matters.” Lastly, in the case of my friend Mr. Holyoake, Judge Erskine delivered himself of the following words, “If men will entertain sentiments opposed to the religion of the state, we require that they should express them reverently, and

philosophers who have discussed this subject all agree that this is right. Mr. Archdeacon Paley has stated this in language so plain, far better than any words I could supply myself. “Serious arguments are fair on all sides—christianity is but ill-defended by refusing audience or toleration to the objections of unbelievers. But of decency we are entitled to demand on behalf of a religion, which holds forth to mankind assurances of immortality, that its credit be assailed by no other weapons than those of sober discussion and legitimate reasoning.”

There is, in my judgment, a strong clear vein of sophistry running through the whole of these judges bits of speeches. How very doubtful is the sentence “fair reasoning is perfectly admissible.” Whether reasoning be fair or unfair, is altogether matter of individual opinion. The reasoning, one man (whose fancy, may be, it tickles) would pronounce *fair*, another would stigmatise as *foul*. Men have yet to learn that the best corrective of abusive or foul reasoning, is reasoning of a totally opposite character. When Paley talked about “sober discussion, and legitimate reasoning,” I dare be sworn it never struck him, that what *he* deemed sober discussion and legitimate reasoning, some thousands of his fellow christians were no less convinced, was discussion so drunk, and reasoning so thoroughly bastard, that the author thereof was worthy of condign punishment. As to outraging feelings by ribaldry, levity, invective, satire, or sarcasm, why should we not be just, before generous, in this as well as other matters? Why is the Atheist to have his feelings outraged, or be the mark for intolerant Christians to pour out their abuse, their ribaldry, their satire, or their sarcasm upon? I suppose it will be allowed, that those who arrived at the conclusion *there is nothing supernatural*, have feelings, feelings too, no less acute than their most sensitive neighbours, who imagine there is something super or unnatural. Away with the cant about feelings—away with the law that offers premiums to hypocrisy, by shielding one class of human opinions at the expence of another—a law that allows, nay, indirectly encourages the strong to trample on the weak, those who think or affect to think by rule and measure—to insult the sympathies, seize on the property, and crush the liberty of all whose range of intellect is less circumscribed than their own. Serious arguments forsooth, let any but an uncandid bigot read the production of a Leslie, a Horne, a Wilson, or almost any other of the most popular christian writers, and he will find their pages teeming with invective, with ridicule, with abuse the most virulent, scurrility the most malignant, as well as other “serious arguments,” directed against the enemies

of the christian religion. There, perhaps, never was a more clever, a more malignant, scurrilous, unscrupulous, or detestable writer than Leslie, and yet he is to this hour an immense favourite with all denominations of christians. Let those who ignorantly suppose there are no other abusers and villifiers than sceptics, take the trouble to read Bishop Horne's "Critical Study of the Holy Scriptures," or Bishop Wilson's "Evidences of Christianity," or the Rev. Mr. Faber's "Difficulties of Infidels;" or—but these are enough, more than enough, and he will find slander the most gross, invective the most bitter, and sarcasm the most malignant, heaped upon all who have dared to dispute the authenticity, or question the genuineness of the christian scriptures. As to Atheists, they are denounced as brutes, monsters, wretches, miscreants, villains, and hard names by the score; which, had they applied to christians, these latter would talk about their feelings being outraged, serious arguments fair on all sides, having no objection to sober discussion and legitimate reasonings, &c.; out upon the canting hypocrites! they hate serious arguments, as well as merry arguments, unless they favour or strengthen their own side of the question, when, whether merry or sad, they care not. What care they about the weapons used, or how used, if they can but gain the battle and achieve the triumph of the cross. I venture to prophecy that the sober discussion and legitimate reasonings *The Investigator* will give them an ample doze of, will no better please the bulk of christian people, than the wild onslaughts and dashing reasonings of the *Oracle*. The *Oracle* made, and will continue to make, priests tremble—*The Investigator* will help to destroy them. The *Oracle* hocked—*The Investigator* will labour to convince the multitude. The *Oracle*, bold to pronounce a certain highly useful class of law-prohibited opinions—*The Investigator* will as boldly state, and freely examine, all opinions in the genuine spirit of candid, fearless investigation. The *Oracle* was protected, and its early numbers edited by me; it will henceforth be under the exclusive management of those friends in whose ability and integrity I have complete confidence—my own energies must for some considerable time come to be solely applied to THE INVESTIGATOR!

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UNDER what aspect this publication be viewed, it is to be considered as one of the most remarkable of the day. The case as it occurred at the police court has been unique and anomalous. An individual in a small and humble shop, by the mere force of a few atheistical sentiments and a scriptural parody, horrified the press, convulsed the public, became a daily town talk, and brought down the great weight and mighty power, of the judicial, administrative and executive authorities. Paterson, thrice honoured, for assaulting the dignity of the trinitarian delusion above, was attacked by the trinitarian tyranny below; government, lawyer, and constable set to work, and together with that officer pledged to protect the oppressed, and maintain even handed justice, namely the magistrate, conspire to crush the "man Paterson." The case occupied the time of the court from an early hour in the afternoon till near midnight. A spirited and admirable defence was carried on by an eminent barrister for one of the cases—while the second was taken up by the accused himself, and the third again by his legal counsel.

A series of the most bold and devastating attacks were delivered on religionism, godism, and the consequent social and political degradations, in the intervals of the most ruffianly interruptions, by order from the majesterial bench. Few instances of the might of moral rectitude have occurred more striking than in the powerful impression which was made, both on the bench and opposite counsel, and the manner in which they were observed to wince under the lashings so unsparingly administered.

Though Paterson has since endured the utmost rigor of treatment which his christian torturers were able to inflict in the twenty-nine days during which he suffered all the privation, pain, and ignominy which it was in the power of brutal turnkeys, commanded by a more brutal governor, to heap on the vilest of criminals. Still am I happy to attest he is undaunted—still determined to persevere in aiding the vast world in the demolition of religious imposture. If in the slightest degree altered, it is only as he yesterday informed me in a determination to persevere in a more determinedly resolute course, to do his utmost to break up the cross and the sceptre. I honour him the more now that he has been submitted to the ordeal, and has come out more eager for the contest. Whoever indulges in the expectation that the contest is over between religious tyranny

and civil liberty is egregiously mistaken. The bats and owls and hideous birds of ill omen are but disturbed. However, the *laissez faire* people, the comfortable lazy folk, who look on and see others suffer in the forward ranks without lending a helping hand, however these sort may hug themselves in the notions that things are going on pretty well considering, and that they'll mind by and by, and that we have a pretty good share of liberty now—they will be rubbing their eyes shortly at the march of religion and tyranny, which are convertible terms. They will begin to wonder, when they see the puritans taking one slice, and the state establishment taking another, and the new Puseyite movement stepping in and claiming all, how the deuce it was they did not see these things, or the approach of them, before hand. Principles will be found after all to be of the highest magnitude for good or for evil. Not this church or that, a few priests or many priests, enormous clerical abuses or equalised clerical remuneration, gross or refined religion—none of these things will be found worthy of consideration—it will be religion or no religion. Theism in any of its complicated forms of monotheism, polytheism, or pantheism, or atheism. This will be the grand theme of discussion, parallel and contemporaneously with that of the justice and propriety of perfectly free discussion on every point interesting to humanity. Besides the report of the speeches, defence, cross examination, &c., there are reprints of the various "Profane Papers" which occasioned so great a sensation. A contribution which came at a very late period from Holyoake, being a noble vindication of Paterson, from the calumnies of professed enemies, and the aspersions of quasi-friends. The various opinions of the newspaper-press have been recorded, and show a faithful and instructive mirror of the temper of the times. Several of the prosecuted, and boldest, and most spirited articles which have created a sensation through the pages of the *Oracle of Reason* are appended.

The address explanatory of the intentions and state of the Anti-Persecution Union, is also added, and the statement set forth that the profits are *devoted to the purposes of the Union*.

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PRIESTCRAFT EXPOSED.

How the parson must laugh in his sleeve,
With pleasure his heart must be skipping,
When he tells them that Adam and Eve
Damn'd us all for a fine golden pippin:
How Cain, too, he married a wife,
Though the story, I own, somewhat odd is,
When to Nod he had to run for his life
He there got a nation of *Noddies*.
When he talks about angels and such,
(Fine fellows, we all must allow,)
I should like for to meet very much,
A few of those gentlefolks now:
If he tells me they're all of them dead,
So my brains I've no need to be troubling,
I'll tell him he lies, to his head,
For the devil's alive, and in Dublin.
Then how Moses was dragged from a ditch,
That prince of impostors of old,
Who deserv'd to be burnt like a witch,
If half is but true that we're told:
He a camel turn'd into a flea,
By the help of his magical rod;
Went dry through the midst of the sea,—
Now that's a damn'd good one by god!
How a stupid old fellow of Uz,
Was curs'd with a stupid old wife,
But so stupid's the tale, how it was,
I can't make it out for my life:
The devil it seems ow'd him a spite,
And play'd him some devilish rigs,
Sent a legion of devils, one night,
Who play'd hell with his poultry and pigs.
Then Sampson, that quarrelsome fellow,
Slew a thousand men with a jaw-bone,
And to vex'em, one night, when quite mellow,
Ran off with the gates of the town;
Their foxes he tied by the tails,
Tho' the devil of a fox was e'er there;
Their windmills too went without sails,
And their castles were built in the air.
Little Davy killed giant Goliath,
With a popgun he sent him to pot,
Then murdered his friend, poor Uriah,
For the sake of his wife's—you know what!
His boy too, a chip of the block,
Had a house with a thousand or more in;
Sweet wenches, to please the young cock,
The devil himself sure for whoring.
But this is no more than a farce
To other fine things that they tell ye,
For one had a speaking jackass,
Another lived in a whale's belly;
With lions some lived in a den,
And others in furnaces frying,
But, heav'n preserve us! some men
Are so cursedly given to lying.
Elisha rode up to the moon
In a chariot all flaming with fire;
But Enoch, one fine afternoon,
Flew a hundred and fifty times higher:
Elijah's two bears, it is said,
Eat forty poor boys at a time,
For just calling the fellow, bald-head!
Now that was a terrible crime.
Captain Jossey called out to the sun
To stand still—so he did, sure enough;
But I think it high time to have done
Repeating such old woman's stuff;
For when with this nonsense you're cramm'd,
To make you believe it all true,
He'll say if you don't you'll be damn'd,
But you ought to be damn'd if you do.

Printed and Published by THOMAS PATERSON,
No. 46, Wych-street, Strand, London, to whom
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THE ORACLE OF REASON:

Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE"

EDITED BY "THE MAN PATERSON,"

Sentenced, on January 27, 1843, by Mr. Jardine, of Bow-street, to Three Months' Imprisonment in Tothill Fields Prison, for exhibiting Profane Placards at No. 8, Holywell-street, Strand, London.

No. 66.] *Originally Edited by CHARLES SOUTHWELL, sentenced, on January 15, 1842, by Sir Charles Wetherall, to Twelve Months' Imprisonment in Bristol Gaol, and to pay a fine of £100, for Blasphemy, contained in No. 4.* [PRICE 1d.]

Second Editor, G. J. HOLYOAKE, sentenced, on August 15, 1842, by Mr. Justice Erskine, to Six Months' Imprisonment in Gloucester Gaol, for Blasphemy at Cheltenham.

EXPLANATORY ADDRESS TO THE FRIENDS OF THE "ORACLE."

THE present period is one of the most critical and important in the remarkable and eventful career of our small but truthful and formidable publication. It becomes the supporters of the *Oracle*, both writers and subscribers, to review the past and determine on the future. The aims, objects, and intentions of the *Oracle of Reason*, as expressed in its own pages, claim our first consideration. An exposition is thus given in Charles Southwell's spirited Introduction—"Starting with the axiom that every human being should be at liberty to express fully and freely his honest convictions, the letter of the text will be adhered to, the battle of philosophy fought inch by inch with its opposers, and the right to publish any and every kind of speculative opinions, coolly but determinedly maintained." Free discussion is here plainly and soundly set forth, and is further and more boldly insisted on, in his article on "Free Inquiry," in No. 2. "The spirit of the martyrs for truth sake, the Vaninis, Servetuses, and Brunanos, is not to be seen in modern practice. *Sauve qui peut* (save himself who can) is now the practical principle; premature cowardice is nicknamed prudence; courage, foolhardihood; all reforms are now to be obtained, according to modern teaching, in so smooth, gentle, and pacific a manner, that men in authority will suffer no sort of uneasiness; the full measure of liberty arrived at by talking about it; superstition rooted out of men's minds without so much as shaking the nerves of 'shovel-hatted orthodoxy'; all battles for truth so skilfully and carefully fought that the soldiers engaged therein, like Satan and his troops, are to use their weapons desperately, without

the most remote possibility of receiving so much as a scratch....No prudent man ever was a free inquirer; and he who can consistently lay claim to that noble title must give up worldly wisdom, and travel the direct road that leads to truth with patience, perseverance, and dauntless courage, never for one moment hesitating, because the journey is long, or the road rough, hilly, and beset with footpads. A free searcher after truth should be clear of partisanship, nay, even all the delights that spring from love and friendship should be, if necessary, sacrificed upon the altar of principle and consistency."

A further manly exposition of the objects contemplated by his new periodical, may be quoted in a few words from the fifty-sixth page. "It was to inspire the lovers of reason with a little enthusiasm—to infuse fresh blood into philosophy—aye, and to make a few fanatics in its cause, that the *Oracle* was published, and that those who pronounce its decrees spoke out so boldly. There is no fear of too much enthusiasm in the cause of truth—and philosophers in general are not the sort of stuff of which fanatics are made. Religious fanatics will dare all in the cause of folly; I should like to see a few more of the same stamp among the teachers of wisdom. A glorious band of thinkers, whose strong thoughts would only be the prelude to strong acts—and whose courage would not require every now and then to be screwed up to the sticking place—or like that of Bob Acres, be in danger of oozing out at their fingers' ends." And effectually did his bold untemperising course spur up the friends of freedom, as he said after his first liberation—when dragged from his home like a felon—not allowed time to refresh his parched lips, thrust cold, hungry, and weary into a cell of Bristol gaol—when stripped like a thief, and hurried to his straw pallet, as one of the vilest criminals that ever swung upon the gallows—having suffered before trial seventeen days' solitary confinement in all the horror of suspense—

he shed no tears, *but once*, and they were tears of joy, sweet tears, *forced* by the kindness of friends, not the malice of enemies. The appeal so earnestly made was responded to, not only on the first clang of war, but in every fresh onslaught. New men stood forward to bear the brunt of the battle, and from Holyoake, who next nailed the colours to the mast, to Paterson who defended them with determined and undaunted energy, together with others banded together and still ready to maintain the contest, no wavering, no flinching, no infirmity of purpose was seen. The exposition of sound views, based on *Atheistic philosophy. Republican politics*, and the obtainment as well as assertion of *unrestricted publication of speculative opinion*, WERE CONTINUED, STILL CONTINUE, and with the help of the enemies of superstition, and the upholders of free discussion, SHALL CONTINUE.

This help is expected, nay, demanded—our real friends are now more than ever called to exert themselves to extend the influence of the *Oracle* far and wide, by a most extended circulation. The POST, as we shall shortly explain, may be made a vehicle for this purpose, where the terrors of the reader predominate over the sense of justice or manliness, or where it is desired to give currency to our opinions in quarters to which they would not by other means have access.

New arrangements are now in progress, which will greatly extend the sphere of usefulness of the *Oracle*. Another number or two will unfold the intentions better than any anticipative description. And it may be fairly determined within the next three months, whether the difficulties in supplying those who are willing and even desirous of obtaining it, are or are not insurmountable, and of consequence whether, notwithstanding recent panics, we cannot find men who will, not only in the metropolis but all parts of the provinces, undertake to supply the demand.

All immediately concerned in a work, so bound and endeared to us all by common sympathies, *convictions*, and sufferings, are now as ready as they ever were to do their part. Or if there be a difference, that difference is in favour of more resolute and steadfast determination to aid in the extermination of the god-imposture, social inequalities, and the establishment of civil liberties in the most real and extended sense. If the *Oracle* was wanted when Southwell was incarcerated, doubly was it required to speak out when Holyoake was immured in the dungeon of Gloucester—and trebly should it thunder in the ears of shovel-hatted orthodoxy, since Paterson was victimised in the cold, dark, and damnable cells of Tothillfields.

M. Q. R.

SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH said, "Butler's 'Analogy' is not his best work, it is not philosophical but religious. The whole of it is contained in a single passage in Origen, which he had honesty enough to give as his motto to the work, the subject of which is the development of the argument—that as imperfections are perceived in the natural world, and allowed, apparent imperfections ought to be no objection to the religious government. Now this can only be an answer to Deists—*Atheists might make use of his objections, and have done so.*" (Life of Mackintosh, vol. ii. p. 474.)

The following is the passage from Origen, "He who believes the scriptures to have proceeded from him who is the author of nature, may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in it as are found in the constitution of nature."

This argument for belief in christianity appears to me the same as the celebrated reason of Tertullian, "I believe because it is impossible," or all nature is an impossibility to us, I find impossibilities everywhere in the christian revelation, therefore I believe it. Cyprian, I think it was, who said he believed christianity from its absurdity—here concurring with the Infidel Hume, who says, speaking of transubstantiation—adherence to a doctrine is in proportion to its absurdity. But those worthies, Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Butler, forget that other traditional and written revelations could show similar credentials of authenticity. Though it must be allowed that the absurdity, impossibility, ridiculousness, and extravagance of the christian, far surpass every rival scheme. The christian religion, therefore, is more worthy of our faith, and less of our reason, than all other superstitions demanding our assent—and it would be useless to deny Messrs. Origen, Cyprian, Tertullian, and Butler this superiority in the argument of analogy. These old truths are continually reviving, and flourish in the soil of Oxford. There is not a single doctrine there enunciated, which, startling us by its apparent novelty and monstrosity, is not, however, very old, and brought down to the present generation in regular apostolic succession. Butler having proved satisfactorily that revelation is an exact copy of what is worst in nature, would make these divine parts of revelation and nature models even for morals. The present Oxford schoolmen, probably only still plagiarising without acknowledgment from those before them, assert the scriptures, but more especially the dogmas of the church, on account of their analogy with nature, to be the key to every science.

I extract the following from the ar-

ticle, "Sewell's Christian Morals, the Ethical Philosophy of Oxford," in the last January number of the *Edinburgh Review*. It will show I have done justice to the views of orthodox divines, and what are the opinions of reasonable but faithless human creatures as to analogy and the Jew-book. Mr. Sewell says, "What are termed the speculative doctrines of the church, are falsely termed so; and that in one instance, morals. Bishop Butler has shown 'The Athanasian Creed to be as much the basis of christian morality, so far as morality is a part of religion, and religion a part of morality, as the ten commandments.' The use to be made, in physical investigations, of the nature, attributes, and moral government of god, is illustrated more in detail. Before we give our readers a specimen of these details, we must observe, as Pitt observed to Wilberforce, on returning him Bishop Butler's celebrated treatise, that there is nothing which analogy may not prove, if it is admitted as a mode of positive proof. Its proper sphere is to remove out of the way objections, whether founded on *a priori* or other reasoning, or on supposed evidence of improbability ill applied. If this be so, what alone can be the consequence, even in the most prudent hands, of searching for similitudes between things which have nothing in common, except their common author? More especially does the folly of quoting scriptural analogies, on the ground of the supposed connection of scripture facts 'with every other branch of facts in every other science,' become quite incredible, when *everybody allows* that much of the precise and positive language of scripture concerning physics, as well as many of its *precedents in moral and social life*, are in *direct contradiction* with those physical truths and moral duties upon which all mankind are now agreed."

When heresies and schisms have become so general, when "everybody allows," except a Wetherall to a Southwell, an Erskine to a Holyoake, a Jardine to a Paterson, the falsehoods and the immoralities of the Jew-book—when even this want of faith has crept into the camp of Oxford, it is high time to discover that these criminal exceptions, even to the low standard of human government, are in striking analogy with the divine attributes and their exercise, and that their consequent effect on the minds and actions of people is the fulfilment of revelation. In this latter respect the *Edinburgh Review* agrees, and after the above abuse of the Jew-book, says, "The scriptures are not the *less true* for their *own great purpose*, whatever we may think of the astronomy and geology which are contained in them; and whether we adopt or not Paley's explanation of the wars of Canaan, or Milton's panegyric on the polygamous marriage bed 'as saints and

patriarchs used." Newman says, "The warnings contained in the historical scriptures, concerning the original baseness and corruption of the heart, are, in the course of time neglected, or rather these very representations are adduced as a proof how much better the world now is than it was once; how much more enlightened, refined, intellectual, manly; and this, not without some secret feeling of disrespect towards the writers of the *plain facts* recorded in the bible, as if, even were the case so bad as they make it appear, it had been more judicious and humane to have said nothing about it." (Sermon v. p. 90, *On Justice, and the principle of Divine Governance*.)

In this sermon the high-priest of the Pusseyites endeavours to show that divine benevolence is a fable of the brain, that justice is the principle of divine governance, and that not human but divine, which can never be satisfied here or hereafter. The analogy, the very fact, he says, bears out the truth of this assertion, and gives the lie to mankind who speak of a benevolent deity. We see it in the sacrifice of men and animals, in the torture of the animate, and the destruction of the inanimate, which god has ever required from his creation. The monstrous eccentricities in the history of the world's superstition, are made to form the attributes of this supposed creator, and after this obvious analogy, the Oxford preacher would engage our feelings in the cause by this splendid piece of eloquence, extracted from the same sermon:—

"Surely to be in gloom—to view ourselves with horror—to look about to the right hand and to the left for means of safety—to catch at everything, yet trust in nothing—to do all we can, and try to do more than all—and, after all, to wail in miserable suspense, naked and shivering among the trees of the garden, for the hour of his coming, and meanwhile to fancy sounds of woe in every windstirring the leaves about us—in a word, to be superstitious—is nature's best offering, her most acceptable service, her most mature and enlarged wisdom, in the presence of a holy and offended god." (P. 106.)

Analogy being less than comparison, the resemblance traced more distant, being a suggestion more than a proof, which afterwards requires the evidence of reason and experience—belonging more to the fancies of poetry, than capable of being submitted in prose habiliments to human judgment—being the slightest of all tests between truth and falsehood, it is therefore the most suitable to the exercise of faith and the disqualification of reason. But analogy in the service of religion, as it is its foundation, so it is farther removed from and a much lower description of analogy than that in use among the profane. Sacred analogy is some discoverable

point of likeness between things as different as they can be, and which would not be found if all things in nature had not something in common between them. On this analogous representation rests the whole prophecies—verses are gutted to suit circumstances, and actions of one kind are made to resemble actions of any other kind, being like to each other, only as words are to words, and works to works.

The Infidel and the christian have come to a happy agreement as to the impotence of reason in questions of faith, as the reader will observe from the following duet between Hume and Newman.

“Hume, in his ‘Essay on Miracles,’ has well propounded a doctrine, which at the same time he misapplies. He speaks of ‘those dangerous friends or disguised enemies to the christian religion, who have undertaken to defend it by the principles of human reason.’ ‘Our most holy religion,’ he proceeds, ‘is founded on *faith*, not on reason.’ This is said in irony; but it is true, as far as every important question in revelation is concerned, and to forget this is the error at present under consideration.” (Sermon iii. p. 45.)

Analogy once established, as the proof of truth, we find not the reason, but the very nonsense of a thing assigned as a cause and motive for human actions. Christians may twist and turn their conduct according to any analogy between it and the bloody sacrifice imposed by a father upon his son, in order to appease him for having made men bad. Not that christians need keep to one, there is a variety for them, and if they wish to be after god’s own heart, they may imitate the pattern man David. Butler and Sewell find out that all morality and science are to be found in the dogmas of the church. Mr. Woodgate, not content with adopting this principle, decries morality otherwise discoverable, and denies any superiority in this particular to christianity. Poor foolish, half-reasonable christians, who do not know any better, when they are driven to their last resource by the sceptical attacks of infidelity, exclaim—well, we don’t care about dogmas, but you must acknowledge the morality of the gospel, as delivered by Christ, particularly in the sermon on the mount, its superiority over all other lessons taught to mankind, stamps the preacher with the mark of divinity, and shows him to be the bearer of a revelation from heaven—the greatest blessing which can be conferred on the universe by a benevolent creator. We are indebted to the Oxford divines for putting revelation in its true light, making its difficulties its idols, and refusing to demur, like other christians—coming to issue on the real question.

Mr. Woodgate says, “The object of

ethics was to establish principles, rather than to give precepts—nor would the science be justly considered defective, if it said less about precepts, and even that indirectly for purposes of illustration. In like manner, in revelation, also, it is not precepts which we learn there, but a way of salvation. Not the knowledge of our duty so much as motives to perform it. There seems to be no moral precept in the gospel, which we do not find in some form in heathen writers, either directly or by implication. And what moral precepts we meet with there, are not delivered as precepts so much as explanation of principles, or as reproof for neglect of them. Even in the sermon on the mount, the blessed truths there adduced are rather in support of the reproach which his hearers had incurred for not having recognised them before, than as there brought forward for the first time. It is obviously lowering the character of the gospel, and detracting from its value and blessedness, to make it depend on the mere purity of its moral precepts. I am aware that some would bring forward in exception to this, the forgiveness of injuries and the love of our enemies. But it must be remembered, that if one instance can be adduced from heathen writers, in which, either directly or by implication, these virtues are approved, it is sufficient to establish the fact that they might be known without revelation, and (as a necessary consequence, which must not be lost sight of) that those who did not practice them, were responsible for the breach of them. The opposites of these virtues seem to be included in the catalogue of sins into which St. Paul represents the Gentiles as being fallen, from not having followed the light of nature. The motive—why we should forgive ‘even as god, for Christ’s sake, hath forgiven us,’ is of course peculiar to revelation.”

We hope on some other occasion to answer the arguments of Butler in his celebrated work, the analogy. According to Sir James Mackintosh, and all his admirers, Butler is ranked “amongst the best thinkers and worst writers, being in the latter particular dark and obscure.” In this is the secret of his strength. Christians combat Infidels with the term of his name and book, being well aware that few like to be groping their way in darkness and obscurity. The christians act somewhat like amphibious animals, if pursued they stir the mud, so that there is no seeing them, and you have to wait till the water clears again. It will be our object to show, with all this armour of faith, this darkness and obscurity of nonsense, that where a thinking part can be found, we will apply the spear of truth and reason. Such an undertaking comes peculiarly within our province, as Butler is with us Atheists—the reasonableness of christianity will be the

point of discussion between us, that disposed of, we shall join our forces and erect in common the standard of atheism.

W. B.

THEORY OF REGULAR GRADATION.

XXXI.

(Mammalia continued.)

THE fore-arm, or third division of the upper extremity, extends from the elbow to the hand, and is formed of two bones, the radius and ulna. The radius, so named from its supposed resemblance to the ray or spoke of a wheel, forms the outer part of the fore-arm, and is shorter than the ulna. The ulna is situated on the inner side of the fore-arm, and is about an inch longer than the radius. The radius and ulna are very short in the whales, and in most of them consolidated together at both extremities. In the bats they are long, slender, and firmly united, to accord with their mode of progression by flight. The ruminants and solipeds, or horses, have these bones consolidated into one.

The hand, or fourth division of the upper extremity, is subdivided into the carpus, metacarpus, and fingers. The carpus, or wrist, forms the upper part of the hand, and immediately succeeds the fore-arm, being placed between it and the metacarpus. The carpus consists of eight small or short bones, in man, and are disposed in two rows. The number almost invariably differs in the other mammalia from this model, though they are usually disposed in a similar manner. The following is Cuvier's statement of their number—In man and the elephant, 8; in apes, the hare, and the mole, 9; in the solipeda, carnivora, and several rodentia, 7; in the ruminantia, from 6 to 7; in the edentata, 6; and in the cetacea, from 4 to 7. In apes, carnivora, and several of the ungulata, the pisiform bone is very large, and by affording attachment to the flexor muscles of the hand, performs the office of the os calcis in the foot. The pisiform bone is the smallest bone of the carpus, named from its resemblance to a pea, *pisum*. The simiæ, in general, have nine bones in the carpus—another distinction between their hand and that of man.

The metacarpus forms the second or middle part of the hand, and phalanges—it is composed of five bones, which are named first, second, or third, according to their numerical order, the enumeration proceeding from the radial to the ulnar side. The metacarpal bones in the whale are five in number, and flattened in the form of phalanges. These last are, two in the thumb, three in the little finger, four in the index and ring fingers, and five in the middle, collectively forming a short but strong paddle. The

shovel-shaped hand of the mole consists of five fingers, each having a metacarpal bone and three phalanges. In the bat the thumb is short, and not included within the flying membrane. The metacarpal bones are long, slender, and cylindrical—the distal phalange is hooked, and sustains a nail by which the animal suspends itself. The simiæ have these parts constructed as in man, except the thumb, which is small, and extends only to the metacarpo-phalangeal articulation. In bears and badgers the five fingers are of equal length, and parallel to each other. In the edentata several of the fingers disappear—for instance in the two-toed ant-eater, the thumb, index, and little fingers are merely rudimentary—the middle finger, however, is proportionally developed.

Among the ungulata the hand is still more diversified—the elephant, for example, has five fingers all united into one mass within the skin. The pig also wants the thumb—he, however, has four perfect fingers, but walks only on two. The ruminantia have but two fingers, each metacarpal bone, supporting three phalanges. In the solipeda there is but a single finger, for instance, in the horse the carpus corresponds to the knee—the metacarpal bones are consolidated into one cannon bone, behind which there are two small splint bones, commencing broad at the knee, and terminating in a pointed manner behind the lower third of the cannon bone. Here we meet with three phalanges, the first called pastern, the second coronet, and the third coffin bone. Lawrence says, "The human hands being terminated by long and flexible members, of which only a portion is covered by the flat nails, while the rest is furnished with a highly organised and very sensible integument, form admirable organs of touch and instruments of prehension. The animal kingdom exhibits no corresponding part so advantageously constructed in these respects. At the same time, the lateral attachment of the arms to the trunk, and the erect attitude, gives us the freest use of those admirable instruments. So greatly does man excel animals in the conformation of the hands, that Anaxagoras asserted what Helvetius has again brought forward in our times, 'that man is the wisest of animals, because he possesses hands.' In such a view we can by no means coincide, yet Aristotle is well justified in observing that man alone possesses hands really deserving that name. Several mammalia have also hands, but much less complete, and less serviceable than that of the human subject, which, in comparison to them, was justly enough termed by the Stagyrice the organ of all organs. The great superiority of the human hand arises from the size and strength of the thumb, which can be brought into a state of opposition to the fingers, and is hence

of the greatest use in enabling us to grasp spherical bodies, and take up any object in the hand, in giving a firm hold on whatever we seize, in executing all the mechanical processes of the arts, in writing, drawing, cutting—in short, in a thousand offices, which occur every moment of our lives, and which either could not be performed at all, if the thumb were absent, or would require the concurrence of both hands, instead of being done by one only. Hence it has been justly described by Albinus as a second hand, ‘*manus parva majori adjutrix.*’ All the simiæ possess hands—but the most distinguishing part, the thumb, is slender, short, and weak, even in the most anthropomorphous—regarded as an imitation of the human structure, it would almost justify the term applied to it by Eustachius, ridiculous. The other fingers are elongated and slender. . . . Monkeys, apes, and other anthropomorphous animals can, in fact, be called neither bipeds nor quadrupeds—but they are quadrumanous, or four-handed. Aristotle observed that the feet of monkeys resemble hands—and Tyson, in describing the foot of the chimpanse (*simiæ troglodytes*), says, ‘But this part, in the formation and its function too, being liker a hand than a foot, for the distinguishing this sort of animals from others, I have thought, whether it might not be reckoned and called rather quadrumanus than quadrupes, that is, a four-handed, than a four-footed animal.’ They have opposable thumbs on the lower, as well as upper extremities—and thus their feet are instruments of prehension as well as their hands. By a thumb we mean a member not placed in a direction parallel to the fingers, but standing off from them laterally, enjoying separate motion, and therefore capable of being brought into opposition to them, as in grasping or prehension. A great toe, in its direction, articulation, and extent of motion, corresponds entirely to the other toes—whereas the joints and muscles must be altogether different in a thumb. It is hardly necessary to point out how unfit the human feet are for all purposes of prehension—but the hind feet of the simiæ really deserve the name of hands more than the front, and are more advantageously constructed for holding. This hind thumb is so characteristic, that it is found in certain simiæ, which have either no fore-thumb or only a rudiment of it.”

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ATHEISM IN LEICESTER.

ONE of the best friends of thorough-going honest heterodoxy, is Mr. Coltman of Leicester. The old gentleman was formerly a devout son of St. Peter—he has been blind from childhood. When Mr. Southwell was lecturing in Leicester, some two years ago, atheism was new to Mr. C., and he humourously said, “he should like to *see* the man who did not believe in a god,” and he gratified his curiosity by *feeling* Mr. Southwell very carefully over, but whether he discovered a difference in form corresponding to the difference in faith, informant saith not. Certainly the best branch of the Rational Society in England is the Leicester branch. There is more of intelligent atheism, real liberality, and daring independence among the members there, than can be found in any other town. In every sense Leicester is a superior branch. A witty friend has a theory, not of “regular,” but of atheistical “gradation.” Persons hovering between philosophical deism and atheism, are said to be in the *tadpole*, or transition state, and are playfully designated “tadpole Atheists.” The young women of the Leicester branch converse with great acuteness upon atheism. One of them, in her religious days, had a droll notion of deity. She believed that notable being to be a great *goose*. She acquired the notion in childhood, from hearing the lines of some prayer-book bishop—

Keep me, O keep me, king of kings,
Beneath the shadow of thy wings.

She could not fancy how anything but a great bird could cover children beneath wings. It is worthy of remark, that the young women here reject the effeminate appellation of *lady*, and prefer the more sensible one of *woman*. We never say Roman ladies and Spartan ladies, but Roman women and Spartan women. The branch lately engaged Mr. Holyoake to deliver a course of lectures on Infidel topics, and headed their bills of announcement in this frank, dare-devil, or more properly dare-*saint*, manner—“Come and hear the liberated blasphemer.” These were subsequently removed by the police. Mr. Holyoake accompanied by several friends, waited on the mayor to learn the reason of it. His answer was, that the bench, after numerous complaints of the godly, considered the bill an outrage on christian decency and morality. The Leicester saints are an exceeding odd race, and christian decency an exceedingly odd compound. Scarcely six months ago the christian press denounced Mr. Holyoake as a blasphemer, he was apprehended as a blasphemer, indicted as a blasphemer, tried as a blasphemer, found guilty by a christian jury, and sentenced by a christian judge as a blasphemer—yet for his friends to say that he *is* a blasphemer is

an outrage on all decency, and a violation of morality. Verily, verily christians are a perverse and inconsistent generation. New bills were issued, headed "Public Decency," sarcastically reflecting on the magisterial christian taste. The concluding lecture was delivered in the amphitheatre, and the incident was turned to account as an appropriate illustration of christian character. It is worthy of honourable remark, that the gentlemen who are the responsible officers of the branch, each declared himself willing to take the onus of the course taken, even should imprisonment be the result. In this the president was himself foremost, thus manifesting a degree of moral courage very estimable but very rare. Sergeant Wright of the police corps, was sent by the mayor to report the lectures, and for further particulars the reader is referred to the sergeant's manuscripts.

CARLILE'S BURIAL.

When the officiating divine, the Rev. Josiah Twigger, arrived at the grave, accompanied by the clerk, one of the deceased's sons addressed the clergyman as follows:—"Sir, we want no service over the body of our late father; he passed his life in opposition to all priestcraft, and we protest against the service being read." The Rev. Divine replied—"Sir, I must do my duty." Another son of the deceased here stepped forward and said—"We have purchased this ground as the resting-place of our deceased parent, and I object, with my brothers, to the reading of the funeral service." (Here loud cries of "Hear, hear," were given by the mob assembled round the grave.) The clergyman continued—"I must and will do my duty, and at your peril abide the consequence that may occur."—*Weekly Dispatch*.

THE charitable consistency of christians, is remarkable, in the account given of the burial of Carlile, by all the daily papers. Our christian examples, the clergymen, make it a point of conscience to do, what at other times they make it a point not to do, according as cases vary, in which they may annoy their enemies. The scruples of the clergy to bury notorious sinners, and unbelievers, are defensible, inasmuch as the order for the burial of the dead, makes the service a mockery in their mouths, a disregard to the directions of the church, and the utterance of a falsehood. The common prayer says, "There it is to be noted, that the office ensuing is not to be used for any that die unbaptised, or excommunicate." Now we say that Carlile was excommunicate by law, and ought to have been so by the church, we know excommunication is now among the many farces which christianity, as established by law, does not perform, but if the church had fulfilled its promises, Carlile's dead body would have been saved this insult from the living, at the moment it should have rested in peace. The *Quarterly Review* lately recommended the revival of excommunication,

and the Rev. Mr. Escott was suspended for three months for refusing to bury the body of a dissenter, as not baptised, because not by the church. But the priest of the cemetery declares it is his duty to lie to his god (we have no doubt of the truth of that), the dead, and the living. The service requires that while the earth shall be cast upon the body, by some standing by, the priest shall say, "Forasmuch as it hath pleased almighty god of his great mercy, to take unto himself the soul of our dear brother, here departed, we therefore commit his body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in *sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life*, through our lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be like unto *his glorious body*, according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself."

I would ask, why Carlile's body was deposited in consecrated ground? It is customary, I believe, in cemeteries for a portion to be set apart for the use of dissenters, around which the mummery called consecration is not performed—why was the body not buried in that portion, when someone might have delivered a suitable oration over the grave? W. B.

ROTUNDA, BLACKFRIAR'S ROAD.

ON Tuesday evening a theatrical performance took place at the above institution, neatly fitted-up expressly for this purpose, the receipts to be devoted to the liberation fund of Mr. Charles Southwell, recently confined in Bristol Gaol, for the expression of heterodox opinions.

Shakspeare's play of the *Merchant of Venice* was followed by the third act of *Hamlet*, after which was introduced the *Spitafields' Weaver*. The dramatis personæ were amateur performers, with one or two exceptions in the last piece. Criticism on such occasions is usually deemed superfluous or inappropriate. It may however in this case be permitted us to say, and it is only due to the parties who got up and sustained the principal characters, to state, that there was more good taste and knowledge of dramatic effect evinced, as well as fewer blunders and absurdities perpetrated, than is the usual accompaniment of amateur performances. Shyluck was enacted by Mr. Southwell, to whom appropriately in every sense, was awarded the most important part.

His reception was marked by the most enthusiastic greetings, and the slight nervousness apparent on so cordial a reception from a crowded and respectable audience, soon gave place to a firm tread and a self-possessed demeanour. The least attentive

observer must have been struck by one of the "signs of the times," which was illustrated on the evening in question, that the surest way to obtain the favor and deserve the sympathies of the public, is to be marked out as the victim of ill usage and persecution.

A full appreciation of one of the most strongly-marked of Shakspeare's characters was obvious on the part of Mr. Southwell, whose reading was remarkably correct, and whose points showed a truthfulness and energy sufficiently distinguishable from extravagance or affectation. One would have supposed him to be an old stager. Of the rest, passing over the ordinary drawbacks of inexperience and stage trepidation, we can speak on the whole favorably. Some indications of talent were displayed which would induce us to encourage renewed efforts, but without further observation it might be invidious to particularise. The scenery, getting-up, and general arrangements were creditable. — *Theatrical Chronicle*.

SUBSCRIPTIONS,

For the Anti-Persecution Union.

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M. RYALL, Sec.

NOTICE.

An "Ex-methodist," Northampton, who asks if the 38th No. of the *Oracle* will be reprinted, is informed that it is intended to reprint all the deficient numbers of the first volume as soon as arrangements are completed, which are now in progress. In less than a month's time it is proposed to take measures for the more effectual distribution of the *Oracle*, which is now burked in many districts, through the alarms of venders.

Can the author of the "Yahoo" send us the certain pronounciation of the word *Yahoo*?

M.R.—Mr. Paterson was liberated from Tothill Fields prison a few days ago, after a month's imprisonment, very ill, and his health is still much impaired. He was more barbarously used, than any other man for blasphemy this century. Some statements upon this subject will be made in an early number.

P.—It is said that Abner Kneeland was the last person prosecuted in America for blasphemy. Whether this is strictly true or not, it is certain that he is a well known veteran of infidelity on that side the Atlantic.

J.F.—"Priestcraft exposed" in the last *Oracle* was originally printed by Carlile.

G.C.—Is informed that a notice on the life, death, and character of the late Richard Carlile will appear next week.

"Omnipax" in type, appear next week.

"A Friend" inquires where he can obtain a copy of the 12 axioms published in 1833 in the first No. of *The Philathean*, a periodical by Robert Taylor. No answer can be given. Perhaps some reader could forward the information to the *Oracle* office. A Friend might have sent his name to the Editor. It is presumed he had nothing to fear from him.

THEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, *Bailey's Coffee House, Old Compton-street, Soho*—To inquire into the origin of the Religious Idea—Religious Systems—Modes of Worship—their Origin—Progress—Present State and Prospects—with a view to the discovery and promulgation of Truth, and the overthrow of Error. Every Tuesday evening at half-past eight. Admission Free.

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Saturday, March 18, 1843.

THE ORACLE OF REASON:

Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

“FAITH’S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE”

EDITED BY “THE MAN PATERSON,”

Sentenced, on January 27, 1843, by Mr. Jardine, of Bow-street, to Three Months’ Imprisonment in Tothill Fields Prison, for exhibiting Profane Placards at No. 8, Holywell-street, Strand, London.

No. 67.] *Originally Edited by CHARLES SOUTHWELL, sentenced, on January 15, 1842, by Sir Charles Wetherall, to Twelve Months’ Imprisonment in Bristol Gaol, and to pay a fine of £100, for Blasphemy, contained in No. 4.* [PRICE 1d.]

Second Editor, G. J. HOLYOAKE, sentenced, on August 15, 1842, by Mr. Justice Erskine, to Six Months’ Imprisonment in Gloucester Gaol, for Blasphemy at Cheltenham.

GOD AND THE TOTHILL-FIELDS PRISON.

THAT odium and penalties are consequent upon advocating atheism are understood as common-places, and the parties engaged in spreading such plain unvarnished heterodoxy look for severe treatment as a matter of course. That they do not particularly wish it, may be easily guessed, but christian charity suffereth *so long*, and is *so kind*, that Atheists are not troubled with surprise when christian choler rises into cruelty and vengeance. For these reasons, I should say nothing about my recent imprisonment, but some curiosity has been expressed to know the nature of my treatment, and this I shall briefly satisfy.

Mr. Jardine and I concluded business at eleven o’clock on the night of January 27th, and at twelve o’clock I was lodged in Tothill-fields prison. On entering, my name, age, profession, and *religion* were demanded, and the recording angel of the gaol who wrote down these particulars was not a little puzzled to define my *religion*. The next day I was forced into a cold bath, where felon filth was daily washed, my own clothes taken away, and a gaol suit substituted in their stead. Afterwards, with a number of felons, I was paraded before the governor, who immediately commenced a volley of taunting abuse. Among other agreeable things, he said, “No matter who or what you are, you shall find before the day is out, what a house of correction is.” He shortly after gave orders that “Paterson must be put in No. 2, by himself.” I was accordingly locked up in solitary confinement, and a bundle of oakum was brought me to pick, with orders to “get it done by 4 p.m.” As I was not allowed to speak, I could not learn what this was for. I had given a piece of bread to an hungry fellow prisoner, and I had once inadvertently turned my head, but whether

the punishment of solitary confinement was for one or both these offences, I could not clearly make out. Pens, ink, and paper were denied me, and no books were allowed me but those most attractive productions the bible and prayer book—and those I had no time to read. In this No. 2 cell I was locked *thirteen* days. According to the rules, the governor only is authorised to confine a prisoner *three* days—but perhaps I was an exception to the rules, for they did not appear to apply, or to be applied in my case.

During these thirteen days, I suffered from cold, hunger, and the peculiar labour I had to perform. My dress was insufficient to preserve warmth, and I could not often feel my fingers or my feet, and during the night I was so cold that I could never sleep an hour together. My fingers were so blistered and cut that I could not pick my oakum but with excruciating pain. My food, such as it was, was continually stopped, on the ground that my work was not properly done. It was in vain that I showed the painful state of my fingers, and explained my suffering from the cold—the only answer was, “I might tell that in some other prison, but it would not do in Westminster,” and I was ordered bread and water for the day. If I strived to do my work well it was not done in time—and if I took care to have it done in time, they pretended it was not done well—do what I would I was in the wrong, and I was certain of nothing but that my food would be stopped. The pangs of hunger were really torturing.

At last the surgeon, who saw my fingers bleeding, ordered me a lotion to dip them in while at work, which afforded me some relief. But I expect that I should have been kept in this state of cold, hunger, and pain during the whole term of my imprisonment, had not my health began to give way so sensibly that the surgeon at last ordered me out, and said I might send for some flannels to restore warmth.

After this I was placed to work in a large room with a number of other prisoners, the warmth of whose breath kept the place a little warm. But here I was not allowed to speak or turn my head. Thus matters proceeded to the expiration of my sentence. I was not permitted to write a single letter or see a single friend, and even a cup of water was denied me at night, when I was suffering from a cold.

In the latter part of the time, when I was not in solitary confinement, I was locked up every morning because I refused to attend prayers. Besides my not believing there was a heaven, I could not divine what I had to thank heaven for.

The governor of Tothill-fields prison is admirably fitted for enforcing and illustrating the gentle doctrines of Jesus. One anecdote of his conduct will illustrate this fitness. I once heard a little boy, who I should think, by the sound of his voice, was about nine years of age, sentenced to two days' solitary confinement and the loss of his supper—for smiling! Poor fellow, he screamed with terror, begged in the most beseeching terms for forgiveness, and protested he would “never smile again.” But the governor ordered two of his he-bears to take him off. I heard his wailings along the passage, till the cell-door clanged behind him. I ardently hoped the poor fellow might live to break the mournful promise, that “he would never smile again.”

In saying that the governor was admirably fitted to illustrate the gentle doctrines of Jesus, I do not speak ironically. Christ's doctrines must be congenial with such conduct, or christians would not seek such expounders of them.

I was sentenced to three months' imprisonment, but as each month commenced on the same day, the day of the convictions, they all expired in one month. Hence I was liberated after thirty days' imprisonment. I reached Wych-street very weak and very hungry. My opinion, that I only did justice to christianity in what I said on my placards, is abundantly confirmed, and I am looking very anxiously for an opportunity of paying the new debt I owe that excellent system.

T. P.

GOVERNMENT PROSECUTION!

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GODDISM *versus* THUGGISM.

THE advocates of goddism exclaim, “Where would morality be without religion?” Yet wherever there is a more than ordinary violation of morality, we always find it to be the result of religious feeling. Few will say that there was ever preached, much less practised, under the pretence of morality, doctrines contrary to all her laws, and tending to the subversion of society. Yet under the sanction of christianity and the ten commandments, the laws of nations and of nature have been and are, over and over again, repealed. Society was formed and laws were made for the protection of life, property, and opinion—all these have been disregarded, in obedience to divine command, and to obtain the divine blessing. The Jew goddites showed the benefit of a direct revelation from heaven by robbery and murder. The christian goddites imitated the sacred people, but on a larger scale. Call god the god of the christians, and twist him to every shape to suit the views of all the robbers, murderers, and tyrants of mankind, wishing to escape from the laws of morality—he is exactly the same with the other gods, or with the last novelty in goddism, the Bhawancee of the Thugs.

This beautiful religion of thuggism, this acknowledgment of a superior intelligence, who governs the world, under the more captivating form of the softer sex, “Revealed to the astonished government,” says Mackay, in his *Popular Delusions*, “a system of iniquity unparalleled in the history of man.” How naturally his account of the Thugs reads of all goddites—“Trained to murder from their childhood—carrying it on in secret and in silence, yet *glorying in it, and holding the practise of it higher than any earthly honour.*” Thus it is always so—prize anything in heaven higher than you do on earth, and you will do the contrary of all which should be done upon earth, and disregard all the laws of mankind, although men have made them for self-preservation.

Here we have a sect, like the christian, existing for two centuries almost unknown. The christians made a mystery of their ceremonies, performed them in secret and by night, were supposed to be haters of mankind, feasting on human flesh and blood, scarcely known and little heeded, until they had spread themselves throughout the Roman empire, and were on the eve of subjugating it to their tyranny. Like the early christians, the Thugs are divided into catechizers and catechumens, priests and deacons, and are gradually initiated into the mysteries. The neophyte does not perform the work of death till he has been first a scout, next a sexton, next a holder of hands, when his next step advances him to the rank of strangler.

When a man, not a hereditary worshipper of Bhawanee wishes to enter the sect, he becomes the disciple of a pious and experienced Thug. As if without carnal knowledge of Jesus, yet guided by his holy spirit, they not only ask that it may be given, but they long seek that they may find, and literally knock that it may be opened unto them. They do not let the tyro engage in the work of murder until they have gained the leave of their divinity, and given three taps as the signal for the commencement of slaughter. This is an observance always kept up in their religious ceremonies, as a summons to their deity to fulfill her promises. It is always, "not my will but thine, O lord, be done." The gooro or priest, says, "Oh Kalee! Kun Kalee! Bhud.Kalee! Oh Kalee! Maha Kalee! Calhutha Kalee! If it seems fit to thee that the traveller now at our lodgings should die by the hands of this thy slave, vouchsafe us thy good omen." Nor, if he commits the deed, and is entered fully into fraternity, does he neglect his divinity—he and his friends immediately take the sacrament after this confirmation. The great immoral doctrine of Christ, which has been of so great service to all his followers, that those who did his will were his brethren—that those who would follow him must give up father, brother, mother, sister, wife—was of course divinely revealed to the Thugs. It came from the fountain head of faith, and source of all iniquity—god. Mackay says, "The relationship between the gooro and his disciples is accounted the most holy that can be formed, and subsists to the latest period of life. A Thug may betray his father, but never his gooroo." How gratifying a principle to the Puseyite.

Mr.Mackay then draws a picture of thug-gism, as if it were not one of goddism universally—of god, in the words of his followers, who was, is, and ever will be, "now and ever shall be, world without end," to which they devoutly cry amen. "Dark and forbidding," says Mr. M., "as is the picture already drawn, it will become still darker and more repulsive when we consider the motives which prompt these men to systematic murder. Horrible as their practices would be, if love of plunder alone incited them, it is infinitely more horrible to reflect that the idea of *duty and religion* is joined to the hope of gain, in making them the scourges of their fellows. If plunder were the sole object, there would be reason to hope that when a member of the brotherhood grew rich, he would rest from his infernal toils, but the dismal superstition which he cherishes tells him never to desist. He was sent into the world to be a slayer of men, and he religiously works out his destiny. As religiously he educates his children to pursue the same career, instilling into their minds, at the earliest age, that thuggee is

the noblest profession a man can follow, and that the dark goddess they worship will always provide rich travellers for her zealous devotees." He then gives us the divine origin of the sect—the old story of the salvation of mankind. Having once killed the devils, by her power and her holy spirit, mankind are to keep themselves in exercise by killing each other. Thus the god of the christians was the first Thug—he sacrificed his own son to defeat the devil, who never thought he would be such an unnatural father. The Jewish god said, the blood and burnt offerings of beasts, the christian god despised such fare, "henceforth human blood, and men devoured by flames must grace my altars." It is useless cavilling, Atheists must allow the infinitely divine perfection of the christian dispensation. Of course, as in every goddism—Jew, christian, and gentile—"To the early Thugs the goddess was more direct in her favours than she has been to their successors." She performed miracles and appeared to them, but like all goddites, they were backsliders, they wanted faith, so she ceased from thenceforward to show her offended front or hind parts. These goddites have relics of their divinity. In the long course of time these have been lost, but representations of them supply their place. The ark of the covenant to them, the cross of their divinity, is a pickaxe, which the Bhawanee first gave them to bury the murdered, and which they have since renewed. This they regard as the token of agreement between them and heaven, as the emblem of salvation and the sign of everlasting grace. They do not swear by the temple, or the new testament, in asservation of the truth—A Thug will never break an oath that he has taken upon the sacred axe. So superior is his faith to the christians', "He fears that, should he perjure himself, his neck would be so twisted by the offended Bhawanee as to make his face turn to his back, and that, in the course of a few days, he would expire in the most excruciating agonies." Believers and unbelievers, counsel and judges, cry out to the juries, what would become of justice if the sanctity of an oath was withdrawn by disbelief in a god, and in a future state of rewards and punishments? Now, as this does not prevent perjury in our country, they should import a belief in Bhawanee and the axe, as faith in *present* punishment seems to have greater effect than in the *future*, and all the moral consequences sought for by religion would be gained.

Faith among them is proved to be stronger than the fact in their own persons. The axe is their scripture, which, veering about, teaches them the way they should go—true to its mission as the needle to the poles. Instead of a written revelation, ever liable to the alteration and destruction of time,

they trust to tradition, which has handed down to them the signs of right and wrong, which can never err. One line of scripture contradicts another, and interpretations are always different; but the good and evil omens which direct the Thugs cannot be mistaken; they need only follow these and they are secure of the divine blessing. A gracious providence sends a dancing master in their way, or they sneeze, either of which is a bad omen—but if a donkey brays, it is a good one. Fools thus direct fools, fools at both ends—which is very scriptural. The animal made by nature unreasonable, leads the thinking human creature, who forsakes his reason. But great is their faith—it may truly be said of them, in comparison with us, as of the centurion and the gentile, “Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” The least sign of wrath, the Thugs abandon “Their enterprise of murder, return home in humiliation and sorrow, sacrifice to their deity, and win back her estranged favour.” They do not, like the belly-god-bishops, regard a bellyfull “as a call to repentance, and turn from the evil of their ways,” by becoming still more gluttonous of all good things. Of the Thugs dependance on a good providence in the diligent observance of signs and omens, Captain Sleeman speaks, “Even the most sensible approvers (those who turned king’s evidence) who have been with me for many years, as well Hindoos as Mussulmen, believed that their good or ill success depended upon the skill with which the omens were discovered and interpreted, and the strictness with which they were observed and obeyed. One of the old Sindorise stock told me, in presence of twelve others, from Hyderabad, Behae, the Dooak, Oude, Rajpootane, and Bundeleund, that had they not attended to these omens, they never could have thrived as they did. In ordinary cases of murder, the men seldom escaped punishment, while they and their families had, for ten generations, thrived, although they had murdered hundreds of people. ‘This,’ said the Thug, ‘could never have been the case, had we not attended to omens, and had not omens been intended for us. There were always signs around us to guide us to rich booty, and warn us of danger, had we been always wise enough to discern them, and religious enough to attend to them.’ Every Thug present concurred with him from his soul.” Oh, if the christian were as diligent in searching the scripture, and in attending to its plain and simple directions! The bible, as Mr. Close said, was the only book, and all the rest of knowledge injurious to it—and as the Reverend Mr. Gridlestone, in his sermon on the late distress, said, there was the bible and the religion of the church of England to guide us to plentiful harvests,

and warn us of the contrary, were we wise enough to see the truth that was in them, and religious enough to attend to their directions. We do not believe till we see a good harvest, but the trust in providence, and seeing the finger of god in every work of men’s hands, is most piously exemplified by the genuine goddism of thuggery.

“A Thug, of polished manners and great eloquence, being asked by a native gentleman, in the presence of Captain Sleeman, whether he never felt compunction in murdering innocent people, replied, with a smile, that he did not. ‘Does any man,’ said he, ‘feel compunction in following his trade? and are not all our trades assigned to us by providence?’ He was then asked how many people he had killed with his own hands in the course of his life? ‘I have killed none;’ was the reply. What! have you not been describing a number of murders in which you were concerned? ‘True, but do you suppose that I committed them? Is any man killed by man’s killing? Is it not the hand of god that kills, and are we not the mere instruments in the hands of god?’ Upon another occasion, Sahib, an approver, being asked if he had never felt any pity or compunction at murdering old men or young children, or persons with whom he had sat and conversed, and who had told him, perchance, of their private affairs, their hopes and their fears, their wives and their little ones? replied unhesitatingly, that he never did. From the time that the omens were favourable, the Thugs considered all the travellers they met as victims thrown into their hands by their divinity to be killed. The Thugs were the mere instruments in the hands of Bhawanee to destroy them. ‘If we did not kill them,’ said Sahib, ‘the goddess would never again be propitious to us, and we and our families would be involved in misery and want. If we see or hear a bad omen, it is the order of the goddess not to kill the travellers we are in pursuit of, and we dare not disobey.’” Oh the power of god in men’s hearts, and the peace of following his ways. These common people had the spirit of an Alva, or Philippe II., and were worthy of their peaceful ends. After their wholesale massacres in the cause of religion, they remember the injunction, “Howbeit his hand goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.” Thus they intercede with heaven for great favours, and pass the whole day in prayer and fasting before they set out upon their expedition. The leader alone sits seven hours with his face turned in one direction.

Their sacrament puts ours to the blush. The ceremony is called “trepanee.” What they eat is goor, or consecrated sugar, and from the appetite for murder it produces, it really would appear to undergo a complete

transubstantiation into body and blood, when received into their bowels of compassion. Would it not be well for us to get some to sweeten our sacramental wine, and inspire a zeal equal to the Scotch revivals? So powerful is the impression made upon the Thugs by this ceremony, that it almost drives them frantic with enthusiasm. Captain Sleeman relates, that when he reproached a Thug for his share in a murder of great atrocity, and asked him whether he never felt pity, the man replied, “We all feel pity sometimes—but the goor of the trepannee changes our nature—it would change the nature of a horse. Let any man once taste of that goor, and he will be a Thug, though he know all the trades, and have all the wealth in the world. I never was in want of food—my mother’s family was opulent, and her relations high in office—I have been high in office myself, and became so great a favourite wherever I went that I was sure of promotion—yet I was always miserable when absent from my gang, and obliged to return to thuggee. My father made me taste of that fatal goor when a mere boy—and if I were to live a thousand years, I should never be able to follow any other trade.” Here was a man, a real honour to goddism, worthy of Jesus, who would forsake all, give up his wealth without regret, his profession, his friends and relations, and become a fisher of men. What a grace and salvation worked in him! what a new born spirit! what a regeneration to life everlasting! when such a change came over him, that he had faith in its causing the same effects upon a horse, and he felt if he lived a thousand years—an eternity for men—he should remain the same. Nor are the Thugs wanting as martyrs, they have greater faith than the apostles, greater than Jesus himself—as long as they perform their part, they believe their divinity will never forsake her children.

“Severity,” says Mackay, “seems thrown away upon the followers of this brutalising creed. To them, punishment is no example—they have no sympathy for a brother Thug who is hung at his own door by the British government, nor have they any dread of his fate. Their invariable idea is, that their goddess only suffers those Thugs to fall into the hands of the law, who have contravened the peculiar observances of thuggee, and who have neglected the omens she sent them for their guidance.” To their neglect of the warnings of the goddess they attribute all the reverses which have of late years befallen their creed. Amongst other offences was the murder of women and cripples. But see the beautiful effects of a conscience given by god—they are fully sensible of their sins, and speaking of their putting to death some women, they said, “And were we not seized soon after? How could we survive things like those? Our ancestors never did such

things.” Speaking of the supposed protection which their goddess had extended to them in former times, one of them said, “Ah, we had some regard for religion then! We have lost it since. All kinds of men have been made Thugs, and all classes of people murdered, without distinction, and little attention has been paid to omens. How, after this, could we think to escape? Davee never forsook us till we neglected her!” But they are not such fanatics as to stick to their goddess when she deserts them—they say she has done her worst, and her authority does not seem to extend beyond this world. Like the Jews, who only believed in temporal advantages from their goddism, yet were fools enough to stick to it, when betrayed by it and made worse than any other nation by perseverance in its belief. Nor are they such fanatics as the christian goddists, who, when the promises of prosperity are all falsified in this world, escape from the impudence by sticking a balance in the other. Their prayers are of the most orthodox character, and would require no alteration, but are ready cut and dried to the service of her majesty in council, whenever the state wants to be independent of the church. “All hail! mighty Davee! great mother of us all!” says the priest. The response, “All hail! mighty Davee! and prosper thy children, the Thugs!” the above is a prayer on occasion of one of their ceremonies, and possesses the merit of being shorter even than the lord’s prayer, which probably would not suit the long supplications and vain repetitions of our service, done, as it were, in mockery of their god and his words. Going on an expedition, the priest says, “Great goddess! universal mother! if this, our meditated expedition, be fitting in thy sight, vouchsafe to help us, and give us the signs of thy approbation.” The Thugs solemnly repeating the prayer and chorus after their leader.

Mr. Mackay concludes, “When religion teaches men to go astray, they go far astray indeed!” As if this was not the doctrine of all religions and of all gods. After having denounced other quacks and quakeries, this god-monger sets up his own medicine of the soul, and publishes a poem to puff christianity as the “Hope of the World.”

W. J. B.

MEALY MOUTHERS.

THERE is a class of silky, creeping, soft-spoken Infidels, very proper and respectable withal, so very proper and respectable, indeed, that they hardly dare express a dissentient word, much less would they contend against the veriest nonsense that may be passed off for argument in their presence. How many stupid fallacies have been promulgated through this timidity. How many ignorant assumptions have passed current as the stirring conclusions of right reason. I have seen the student of theology, one who had spent a considerable portion of time in laborious investigation, stand awed or silenced by the cuckoo clamour of a bla-

tant bibleist, who had sucked in the god-poison with his mother's milk, and who had so befuddled his brains with copious potations from the fountain of grace, that he could neither institute a comparison, or draw a conclusion. Now, if this impunity on the part of assuming dullards were granted them solely on account of the profuse perspiration of sympathy continually bedewing sceptical "organisations," we could partly account for the religious rubbish continually blocking up the highways of reason. I am not disposed, however, to take for granted all the sentimental rhodomontade of the Infidel, any more than the humility humbug of the christian. The charity cant on both sides is mighty fine, as a profession, but those who get behind the scenes quickly discover the flimsy curtain that covers the eye-for-an-eye, the *quid-pro-quo* and hard-bargaining mammon-worshippers of all denominations. And is it marvellous that such a spirit pervades society, when we know the nature of "society's bonds," *alias* fetters, or understand anything of our political institutions, *alias* oppressions? Know we not that the god-delusion is at the bottom of every move, from the statute of parliament, to the three-cooked hat of a parochial beadle? Do we not live to fight, and fight to live? Do we not lie, cheat, bamboozle, and cajole? Do we hesitate one moment in sacrificing a competitor in business? Do we not point blank contradict the poor devil who happens to be obliged to "solicit the favour of our custom," should he overstep for one iota the limits of probability? Shall I be told that the trader, steeped to the chin in profits and percentages, has a grain of scruple in the way of sympathy and charity, and such like, in telling a man his mind in the wringing of a bargain? When I see these magniloquent praters scorning to take advantage of their less intelligent and poorer brethren in the money-grubbing departments—when I see them holding out a helping hand to the depressed and the fallen—or, more than all, when the sneer, the sarcasm, the nod, the wink, the inuendo at another's expense is checked, and the bitter remark couched in gentle language is forborne, then will I give credit to the charity folks for the real and genuine quality, not the spurious Brummagem ware. Meanwhile, if we have a superfluity of the article, there are plenty of ways to promote its better and more useful distribution. Some of the more ardent and less worldly Infidels would fare much better, and be enabled to promote the cause infinitely more, could some of the surplus sympathy, and beaming benevolence be suffered to reach them in ever such small quantities. Southwell would have been much better provided for, superior in all respects as his treatment was, and liabilities

would have been avoided, had there been a similar degree of steadiness evinced by those who volunteered to assist, as they would have displayed in a profit-mongering transaction. Holyoake and family would not have needed, at one period of the Union, to have depended for the support which was their due, on the private contributions of those who had already lost most time and money in organising the movement. The "Man Paterson," the "Boy Clarke," and the Shop would have been largely and munificently aided, had there been more, not of charity, but of honesty, among the very numerous, and some of them very wealthy Infidels, whose secretly chuckled and lauded the Holywell-street doings. I know that there are grievous moral defects among the Infidel party, though not such grossness and brutality as among god-almighty's own. Those who fall upon their knees or crawl on their bellies to such a base, bloody, and brutal complication of vices as the nasty Jew-god, must be expected to surpass all beside in enmity. It must not, however, be overlooked, that those who have kicked off the god-incubus are still left in fear and trembling under its former influence. It is only after long discipline that they can reconcile themselves to be liberated from a superstition, or a superstitious influence. Thence arises the vile neglect of the active of their own party, and the disreputable cowering before nincompoop goddists. It is quite time to meet these impudent impostors on, at least, an equal footing. Allow them no impertinent assumption of superiority—meet them foot to foot, and stop them on the instant when any pretended enlightenment of an exclusive character induces them to forget the courtesies due from one man to another. Holyoake's dialogue in No. 64, is an excellent instance in point. If a rude fanatic presumes to doubt you or any man being an Atheist, question immediately his theistical belief. Should he question your sanity for being an Atheist, suggest his lunacy for being a Theist. Though ever courteous to a well-conducted reasoner, show the arrogant god-monger that you have enough of self-respect and love of equality to put down his unwarrantable pretensions.

M. Q. R.

NEXT WEEK WILL BE PUBLISHED

No. 1, of

THE INVESTIGATOR.

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HOW CHRISTIANITY SHOULD
BE ATTACKED,

IN ANSWER TO "WET-BLANKETISM."

To the Editor of the Oracle of Reason.

SIR.—In my previous article upon this topic, I proposed the adoption, as a rule of conduct, of the following—that no one has a right, though he may have the power to do so with impunity, to unnecessarily or thoughtlessly hurt the feelings of another. To this you answer, "the evident folly of the *spirit* of such a proposition in connection with a struggle for freedom, is so apparent, and would have such a paralysing effect if acted upon, that the writer himself admits that 'some persons' feelings are so morbidly sensitive, that to attempt to suit ourselves to them is quite out of the question.'" Here you have mistaken me, for these latter words of mine were not intended to modify or restrict, but to *explain* the principle proposed. Had I said, "No one has a right to hurt the feelings of another," leaving out the words "unnecessarily or thoughtlessly," then, indeed, it would have been deserving of being stigmatised as paralysing. But *as* I worded it, if, to obtain freedom, it be necessary to hurt people's feelings, it is allowed you to do so. I cannot agree with you as to the folly of the *spirit* of my proposition in connexion with a struggle for freedom. For what is its *spirit*? That we be chary of offending or hurting the feelings of those to whom we are opposed, not allowing that chariness to cause us to let an advantage slip through our fingers, or miss one within our grasp. Prudence, putting out of the question any higher motive, dictates, I think, this course, when it happens, as at present, that our opponents are considerably in the majority. Under such circumstances, it is absurd to think of gaining our point by force, or anything appertaining to it—we can only succeed by appeals to their reason and their better feelings—a course which certainly does not comprehend or allow of anything offensive. But you answer, "No opposition can be offered in discussion of received opinions, which will not be deemed offensive." This, to me, seems rather too harsh and sweeping a condemnation. Doubtless, it was true enough some time back, and is so still of a great many. But I think Lord Denman uttered the sentiments of the public of the present day, when he declared that "Discussions on a subject, even the most sacred, might be tolerated, when they were conducted in a fair spirit—but when appeals were made not to reason but to the bad feelings of human nature, or where ridicule or invective were had recourse to, it could not be considered discussion." As also did Mr. Justice Erskine, when he said (quoting from Paley), "Serious arguments are fair on all sides. Christi-

anity is ill defended by refusing audience or toleration to the objections of unbelievers. But of decency, we are entitled to demand, on behalf of a religion which holds forth to mankind assurances of immortality, that its credit be assailed by no other weapons than those of sober discussion and legitimate reasoning." Do not imagine that I consider them justified in imposing such a restraint upon the playful and the witty. I certainly do, do so to the extent of the prevention of such indiscriminate attacks upon christianity as those which took place in Holywell-street, but not to the preventing the publication of works, which though highly offensive to, and unfit for, some, may be to others the very pabulum fitted for them, and at the same time pleasing to their intellectual palate. I cannot believe that restraint, to the extent that I approve of, proceeding from care for the feelings of the religious, would, in the slightest degree retard the march of infidelity—for I have noticed, that so various is the treatment required for the disease, religion, owing to the different constitutions and temperaments of, and amounts and kinds of knowledge possessed by, the patients, that scarcely two cases are similar. To some the idea of no hereafter is terrible—accordingly, this should be kept out of the way at the beginning, or they would get a shock which would make all your after efforts unavailing. Some, whose veneration is very great, would be horrified at the language of the "Yahoo," or even of Paine—to commence with such works as these would be to invite failure. Now, in such attacks as those which took place in Holywell-street, these various modifying circumstances are not, and cannot be taken into consideration, and, therefore, I consider it a kind of moral quackery. The nostrums, that is to say, the placards, were presented to the minds of all indiscriminately—just as Morison, or any other quack, prescribes his pills, without the slightest knowledge of the patient. As a rule, I disapprove of *public* attempts to extirpate religion—being convinced of their almost total inefficacy. A thing which has been stuffed into people from their earliest infancy is not to be cast out by means of a few smart arguments and cutting satires—it rarely gives way to anything but the undermining and incessant attacks of friends and acquaintances. And herein I perceive one great advantage in the competitive state of society, for in it no parent can insure that his child shall not come in contact with an Infidel, and, as a consequence, have his religion overthrown, should the Infidel happen to be a clever one. Another advantage of private infidelising is, that it enables us to take into consideration the feelings of the most morbidly sensitive. Upon this point you ask,

Who is to decide when the feelings of those who are not the subjects of such morbid sensitiveness are unnecessarily or thoughtlessly hurt? It is not pretended that the matter can be reduced to line and rule. The principle is found capable of being acted upon in the common affairs of life, without any very great disagreements. Those who are most morbidly sensitive, get no sympathy from the great mass, who are not so, and whose opinion settles the matter. *They* also would decide in our case. It is the mass we wish to conciliate—we can afford to offend the few. But you answer, “Every man has an equal claim, in justice, with every other man, to have his feelings respected,” and, “a hatred of cruelty would lead a compassionate man to respect the feelings of the class most sensitively alive to ridicule or opposition, and not the class whose reason to a great extent governed their feelings, and whose sufferings are, as a consequence, proportionately less.” Very true—but, if for the good of the many, it be necessary to injure the few, these claims of the few must be set aside. I don’t know but what I have granted too much—for morbid sensitiveness is a disease whose nature is to cause its possessor to be pained at what does not pain another. This is its natural consequence, and I do not see that they have any more right to claim an exemption from it, than has ignorance to claim an exemption from the consequence of putting its hand into the fire. Benevolence will of course, as far as practicable, mitigate their condition—but they have no right to expect sacrifices to be made to their convenience to an unlimited extent.

It would be impossible, no matter what you said or did, to prove that you have made an unjust use of discussion—for whatever you may have done, you could not very well surpass your opponents in ribaldry and invective, considering that a parson, the Rev. John Ryland, A.M., has thus described an Atheist—“An Atheist is a sickly, putrid wretch—his head is crazy and his heart is rotten—he is destitute of right reason, and void of common sense and honesty. His putrid malignant soul can have no ideas of right or wrong—he confounds all notions of baseness and generosity. His soul is destitute of every moral excellence and lovely perfection—it is quite unqualified for self-enjoyment or social virtue, or a moment’s true happiness. What are the springs of action to this absurd brute? What reasons has he for opposing the existence of god? Is it not pride and lust, a corrupt pride of heart, and a furious, filthy lust of body? Is it not that he may act the beast without control, plunge into unclean commerce without blushing, indulge lewdness without shame, and give an unbounded range to his filthy appetites without one keen reflection?” Now I

do not see how we could very easily exceed this, and justice allows “a tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye,” therefore you cannot be convicted of making an unjust use of discussion. Nevertheless, I think you are amenable on the score of impropriety and want of consideration. But granting that you can *claim* the right of uncontrolled freedom of discussion, you must confess that you stand very little chance of obtaining it while your opponents are in the majority, and while you act in such a manner as leads them to conclude that you would make an offensive use of it, had you it in your possession. Prudence again dictates the course you should pursue.

You ask, in whom do I expect a re-action in favor of superstition and priestcraft. Why certainly not in Infidels—not in those “freed from error,” but in an immense class—the passive religionists. There are various kinds of them. There are those who feel no desire to take up arms for their faith, so long as they think they can decently avoid doing so—and who, so long as infidelity does not show itself too glaringly, are accordingly content to leave it alone and let it win its way. Others there are who think if they let infidelity alone it will soon die out—and who persuade themselves, so long as infidelity does not make too great a hullabaloo, that it is next thing to extinct. It is these classes, when once roused, who are the foremost in the war of persecution—perhaps they think they are called upon to make up for their former negligence. OMNIPAX.

SUBSCRIPTIONS,

For the Anti-Persecution Union.

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NOTICE.

“The Life, Character, and Death of R. Carlile,” in type, but unavoidably postponed until next week
Received.—No. 3 of the “Anatomy of the Heretodoxies,” by M. Q. R., and “Parliamentary Religion,” by W. J. B.

THEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, *Bailey's Coffee House, Old Compton-street, Soho*—To inquire into the origin of the Religious Idea—Religious Systems—Modes of Worship—their Origin—Progress—Present State and Prospects—with a view to the discovery and promulgation of Truth, and the overthrow of Error. Every Tuesday evening at half past eight. Admission Free.

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THE ORACLE OF REASON:

Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE."

EDITED BY "THE MAN PATERSON,"

Sentenced, on January 27, 1843, by Mr. Jardine, of Bow-street, to Three Months' Imprisonment in Tothill Fields Prison, for exhibiting Profane Placards at No. 8, Holywell-street, Strand, London.

No. 68.]

Originally Edited by CHARLES SOUTHWELL, sentenced, on January 15, 1842, by Sir Charles Wetherall, to Twelve Months' Imprisonment in Bristol Gaol, and to pay a fine of £100, for Blasphemy, contained in No. 4.

Second Editor, G. J. HOLYOAKE, sentenced, on August 15, 1842, by Mr. Justice Erskine, to Six Months' Imprisonment in Gloucester Gaol, for Blasphemy at Cheltenham.

PARLIAMENTARY RELIGION.

In the late debates on Ellenborough's impious and idolatrous proclamation, as it is called, Brougham and Macaulay differed as to the history and objects of the temple of Somnauth. Brougham said, "The Somnauth proclamation had been described to be an insult to the feelings of the mussulmans, and also to the feelings of the christians—it had been described as a sacrifice to the prejudices of the Hindoos at the expense of the mahometans. On this he joined issue. It ought to be known, that these gates had originally belonged, not to the Hindoos but to the Bhuddists, who had nothing to do with the Hindoos."

The Bhuddists profess a religion, whence the christians have borrowed the much-boasted and never-observed precept of their faith, the forgiveness of injuries. The meek and humble followers of Bhudda, acting up to their profession, lost their country to proselytising mohammedans and christians. Love of Mammon was our motive to conquest, our pretended faith was a mere excuse, and the addition of insult to oppression. The moral code of Bhudda not only leaves far behind the *pure* and *peaceful* morality of Jesus, but seems prophetic of those invaders who should alternately introduce war to the natives of the east, with the varied uses of gunpowder, and offer them peace, with liquid fire and intoxicating drugs. Whilst our rule enriches us, it brings them famine. If we do not actually enslave them, our commerce and our policy renders them no longer free-agents, but the mere passive creatures of our interests. The bhuddist commandments, it will be seen, interdict the sale of intoxicating liquors, prohibit poison, the introduction of destructive weapons, and the slave trade.

Major Forbes says, p. 305, of his "Eleven Years in Ceylon"—"I shall give a brief account of the bhuddist priesthood, and of the moral laws of a religion, the *excellence*

and *simplicity* of which may astonish those who have only heard it mentioned to be condemned as an *impure, cruel, and unintelligible* portion of paganism..... The religion of Bhudda enjoins its followers to place reliance on Bhudda, his religion, and its priesthood. It enjoins also just conversation, and strict adherence to veracity. Just conduct, and incessantly endeavouring to counteract the effects of former sin by the practice of active virtues. Just living, earning a livelihood by honest means. To reverence priests and your parents. Forgiveness of injuries is inculcated as a matter of wisdom as well as of virtue. This religion forbids its followers—to envy their neighbours or covet their property—to follow the worship of false gods—to commit adultery—to indulge in unprofitable conversation, or use irritating or unbecoming language—to destroy any animate being—to sell the flesh of animals, or rear them for slaughter—to trade in deadly weapons, or fabricate instruments of war, or anything to be used in the destruction of life—to trade in poisons—to use, prepare, or sell intoxicating liquors—to traffic in human beings, to sell one's children, or transfer a slave—to deprive any one of his property by violence, fraud, or deception—to tell a falsehood, or use words to conceal the truth." Bhudda thus sums up the duties of mankind, "abstain from all sin, acquire all virtue, repress thine own heart."

Now let us turn to the ignorance, the hypocrisy of Macaulay. We would call his speech the language of fanaticism, but he says, "I abjure at once all intention, and every wish to raise any fanatical outcry, or lend my aid to fanatical progress. I solemnly declare that I would, at any time, rather be the victim than the tool of fanaticism." He continues, "I believe, sir, that in no part of the world is there a superstition more unfavourable to the advancement of knowledge and of civilisation. There were many fables, the very believing of which produces the utmost degradation of the mind, bound

up with these false notions ; many errors and prejudices in reference to physical subjects are bound up with their distinct and odious belief ; there were symbolical badges teaching them a kind of worship which I will not mention ; their very forms of worship are connected with the worst forms of prostitution (hear, hear). There is a great and deplorable degradation of the female races. And, sir, when we have said all this, we have not said the worst. The most fatal crimes against religion and against property are closely allied to the religion they uphold : they have human sacrifices to their deities—they have still the inhuman suttee, by which the widow is sacrificed by her own children. Even the atrocious practice of the Thugs is carried on notoriously under the apparent directions of their divinities. During my stay in India I read the examination of two Thugs, where one of them reprimanded his brother for letting off with his life a traveller who had fallen into their power, saying, ‘ How can you expect our goddess to protect us, if you thus allow the life of the traveller you have taken ? ’ ”

This abuse, insult, and *blasphemy* of the people of the east, and their religion, is the very language which, used by Paine and Southwell against the bible and the religion of the Jews and christians, got themselves and their publishers prosecuted. Macaulay proceeds to the old humbug of contrasting his assumptions against the religion of others, with his puffs in favor of his own, always uttered on such occasions, and always rapturously cheered. He said, “ But the inevitable effect on the people of India was to make them believe that we attached no importance to the vast distinction between that religion, every work of which has always been, beyond all other religions, to advance knowledge and learning, to widen the field of domestic happiness, to advance and secure public and personal liberty, and which, in the old world, has struck off the chains of slavery, everywhere raised the condition of woman, and assuaged the horrors of war ; and that other religion, which we cannot sanction or support without committing an act of treason against civilisation and against humanity (loud cheers). We might have looked with some sort of favour on his lordship’s acts and intentions, if those insults had been offered to the most degrading and most corrupting of all forms of worship, and if the homage had been paid to some reasonable and salutary doctrine. But his lordship took just the worst possible way of deviating from the required neutrality in the orders which he issued. He deviated from his proper course in the wrong direction ; he offered an insult to truth ; and he paid homage to the most vicious falsehood. Is it not an insult to truth ? To what religion is it that the offering was made ? It

was to lingamism—to a religion which is polytheism in its worst form, which in its nature presents the most degrading, the most odious, the most polluted representation of the supreme being. It is to that doctrine, which more than any other is fundamental to everything in the Hindoo religion, and it is in violation of all those principles which we are taught to consider as the mainspring of christianity. And what is this temple which my Lord Ellenborough means to restore ? The honourable gentleman who last spoke seemed to think that he had achieved a great victory when he made out that the offering was made to Siva and not Krishna. Why Krishna is the preserving deity, and Siva is the destroying deity, and, as far as one can venture to express any preference for these false gods (hear, hear, hear), I confess that my own tastes would lead me to admire rather the preserving than the destroying power (hear, hear). ”

Macaulay takes it for granted that the temple of Somnauth can only be restored to a state belonging to periods which he chooses to select. When we send missionaries and bishops to Jerusalem and all our colonies, it might be asked—the religion of what period do we wish to propagate ? Do we send out apostles of the horrors, absurdities, and indecencies of the Jew-book—the incomprehensible mysteries of christianity—those humiliating maxims on the one hand, contradicting our usages, or those revolting practices on the other hand, drawn from holy writ ? Do we come with texts and examples, which for centuries since the promulgation of judaism and christianity, have deluged the world with blood, through the means of sacred wars and persecutions ? Do we wish to introduce tithes instead of the voluntary principle, and ecclesiastical tyranny so firmly established in all christian countries ? Macaulay and other bigots deny the whole history of their own religion, and not able to find exceptions in its favor, represent a few moral observances on their part as the pure examples of christianity. Are they to speak of Hindoo suttees, thuggees, and infanticides—and be silent about our religious wars, fires, murders, robberies, and executions ? Are they to abuse the Hindoo religion with impunity, at the very moment that they are plundering and incarcerating victims who have been guilty of the same freedom towards the christian religion ? Are a few to have their feelings respected, and more than a hundred millions to be grossly libelled ? Are unblushing lies to be uttered in favor of the faith in power—wholesale falsehoods to be fabricated of the creed of the conquered—and truths at home and abroad never to be stated ? There is not a charge made against the religion of the Indians, which we could not produce as having been made against chris-

tianity, and of which we could not, more or less, convict it. Daily we attest such evidences, and daily we are prosecuted for the very words which Macaulay uses against the religion of the east, which spreads over a population greater than the whole of christendom. The religion Macaulay vilifies extends its history over centuries before Moses and Jesus, from whom we have derived all the nonsense of our creeds, which from frequent adulterations and change of masters, have become so unintelligible, that we have to look for a meaning from the original proprietors. In conclusion, we would ask Mr. Macaulay, in his own language, if the christian religion does not abound in fables, "the belief of which *has* produced the utmost degradation of the mind" and body? Are there not "many errors and prejudices in reference to physical subjects bound up with" the odious christian belief? Are there not "symbolical badges" of the most disgusting and horrible kind exclusively belonging to the christian religion?—to wit, a convicted felon, nailed upon a tree—a butcher father gloating over his agonised and tortured son—the disgusting cannibalism of the sacrament—and the lascivious intercourse of a pigeon with a woman. And if the very forms of christian worship are not "connected with the worst forms of prostitution," the christian religion does not prevent prostitution and licentiousness, in its most disgusting forms—a result not to be wondered at when we peruse the beastly volume from whence that religion is derived. There is, moreover, in all christian countries a "great and deplorable degradation of the female races"—and the most fatal crimes against property and life are closely connected with the christian religion.

W. J. B.

SUPERNATURALISM

CONSIDERED AS A QUESTION OF MORAL INFLUENCE.

IV.

WHILE in Bristol Gaol, some papers of mine were published in the *Oracle*, but, for reasons sufficiently obvious, without name or initial appended to them.* Now that I am once more free to act in harmony with my *own* feelings, I gladly seize the opportunity to acknowledge myself the writer of the papers here simply alluded to, which, however, I propose in future numbers to particularise, at least those of them, serial in character, which I commenced while a prisoner, but from various causes could neither conclude nor carry forward, without subjecting

myself to very dangerous inconveniences. Like Sterne's starling, I was caged, and could not get out. *Then* some degree of reserve was unavoidable; *now* anything of the sort would assume the complexion of criminality, and I will begin "to make a clean breast," by avowing myself the writer of three articles which appeared in early numbers of the second volume, headed, "Supernaturalism considered as a question of Moral Influence"—a question second to none in importance, whether we consider the meagre, unsatisfactory manner in which it has usually been handled, or the great and good results that may be expected to flow from a right understanding of its true bearings. No single error has more tended to strengthen imposture, and perpetuate folly—no single error so largely profited *priests*, and impoverished the *people*, as the popular, nay almost universal, error, that belief in, hope from, and fear of, supernatural agencies has a moralising influence. This I unhesitatingly pronounce to be the error of errors—the error that made men vile, and keeps them so—the error that must be rooted out of man's intellectual nature, ere it is possible he can become a truly moral creature.

A writer who well understood the value, or rather mischief, of supernatural influence, observed, "It is the fashion of those who patronise an abuse, to ascribe to it all the good that exists in spite of it." Such indeed is the fashion, and those who tell us the fear of god is the beginning of virtue, who assure us a dread of hell-fire is most salutary in its effects, who are quite satisfied men in the gross can be more easily and morally governed on the principle of terror than on the principle of love—these men, these patronisers of abuses to which they ascribe all the good that exists in spite of them, are called upon to explain how it happens that Englishmen, who, in general, firmly believe there is a hell, *certainly* for the heterodox, and *very likely* for themselves, are not by any means the best possible patterns of morality. They believe firmly enough all that priests tell them to believe, but they are by no means moral enough. With exceptions rare indeed, they believe in at least one god. They are sure *he* exists, they are sure *he* will, in another world, reward the good and punish the bad, for the deeds done in this—and yet they commonly act as though they held no such belief. The truth seems to be, that religious belief much more tends to make men hypocritical than sincere, apparently honest than really so. I have a strong conviction that human laws are much more efficacious in repressing crime, and what is far better, repressing the desire to be criminal, than all the so-called divine laws that human wit has ever invented or human tongue promulgated.

* All the papers which have appeared without signature, were from the pen of Mr. S.

I readily grant there are states and conditions of men, in which the fear of heaven and the hope of hell may exercise a very salutary influence—but they are radically corrupt states—they are totally false conditions. Hume, in his history of England, when reflecting upon the wretched condition of its inhabitants in early and barbarous ages, says, “It must be acknowledged, that the influence of the prelates, and the clergy was often of great service to the public. Though the religion of that age can merit no other name than that of barbarous superstition, it served to unite together a body of men, who had great sway over the minds of the people, and who kept the community from falling to pieces by the factious and independent power of the nobles. And what was of great importance, it threw a mighty power into the hands of men, who, by their profession, were averse to arms and violence—who tempered by their mediation the general disposition towards military enterprises—and who still maintained, even amidst the shock of arms, those secret links without which it is impossible for human society long to subsist.” Now, I call not in question either the truth or philosophy of this paragraph—my thorough conviction being that the history of civilisation in Europe, not to mention its history in relation to any other quarter of our globe, uncontestedly proves that religion has, at various periods, contributed very largely to the progress of correct thought and general happiness. I never doubted, that during ages of barbarism, and lawless violence, priests were of immense utility; or that the influence of the prelates and the clergy was, “often of great service to the public;” but it is precisely because human intellect was then in a savage undisciplined state, that priests were useful, it is precisely because men were in those times of blood and horror more fierce, and hardly less ignorant than brutes, that religious influences were beneficial, but does it follow from these facts, that religious influences are *now* beneficial, or that it is a wise policy *now* to maintain an army of priests and prelates for no other purpose than to cajole the people, to terrify consciences, in order that they the more easily may enslave them? Can it be a fitting or a wise policy, in this age of comparative light and knowledge, to maintain at the state’s charge a set of pampered, idle, knowledge-hating priests, for the express and sole purpose of dressing up old superstitions in new garments?—and systematically damaging the brains of all who are within the sphere of their influence, by teaching as divine truth the veriest trash that ever polluted human understanding? Happy would it have been for the human race, had they instinctively abhorred, instead of idolised, the theological

fictions that in every age and clime have been palmed upon them by priests. Happy, thrice happy, if—

The turf had been their sacred shrine,
Their temple *world* that arch of thine,
Their censors breath the mountain air,
And silent thoughts their only prayer.

But ’tis of man I write—of man as he has been, and as he is—not the noble creature I can easily conceive he might have been, and perhaps may be, when, made wise by experience, he shall give fair play to his faculties, and do justice to his nature—a justice he never can do while he is the miserable slave of creeds. We have been told human feelings are stronger than creeds—and sometimes they are, but only sometimes. In nineteen out of twenty christian breasts the creed is stronger than the feelings, and christian creeds, this being a christian country, we are bound to believe, is the least harsh, the least demoralising of creeds. All creeds emanate from the god-idea. The idea and the creed never fail to harmonise. Such as is the god-idea, such will be the creed in spirit and in substance. If there were no supernaturalism, that is, no unnatural (for that is the right word) conception reduced to system, and taught as unquestionable truths, creeds would be at once and for ever blotted from “the book and volume of our brains.” It is because presumptuous men dare put forward their crude notions of a being called god, confessedly unnatural, or not natural—for unnatural is a word obviously having no other than a negative signification—it is because, I say, they have dared to put forward their crude notions of such a supposed being as indisputable, and not to be disputed truths, that creeds, harmonising with the notion, are so disastrous in their influence. In the “New System of Organic Chemistry,” a work of the persecuted Raspail, I find the following magnificent paragraph:

“Your lords, masters, and chiefs, are still authorised, *nay compelled*, to instruct you in the absurd belief that your god is susceptible of insult—as if the *omnipotent being* of your imagination could ever require the labour or the wealth of a priest as the means through which to obtain respect from his creatures. Hence you still look upon the mighty of the earth as representatives of that being. They who have been collectively entrusted by the mighty conquerors of man with the making and applying of your laws are still obliged to take a form of oath ‘*before a god*,’ and through a god, ‘on mystical books,’ to a crown—which books they are still compelled to kiss like children, or mental slaves, in the midst of your legislative assemblies, and before part of a bigoted public, who all the while presume to call themselves reformers.”

It is quite natural that those who imagine an *omnipotent being*, should ascribe or attribute to him all the qualities they think fit that a god should possess. The idea of goodness, as every thinker knows, is by no means a fixed idea, or precisely the same in any two individuals, however they may seemingly agree thereupon. Agreement approximating most closely to perfection appears perfect, but never can be supposed really so. How wide then must be the difference between members of opposing sects as to the idea of what constitutes a *good god*. Some deists argue that if all men believed in the existence of a good deity, morality would be greatly promoted by such belief, seeing that even the vilest would incline to imitate that excellence they ascribed to their god. And I doubt it not, that is, I do not doubt or question that men naturally aspire to act as they suppose their god acts, because they all believe the god they worship infinitely superior to themselves—and there is what may well be deemed an indestructible principle, consequent upon our existence as sentient beings, impelling us to admire and imitate other beings, be they real or imaginary, whose nature and conduct greatly excel our own. But, unfortunately for this *crack* deistical argument, in favour of a belief in a good god, each individual's good god is only good to him; it is merely goodness personified, in harmony with his or her idea of goodness. It will scarce be questioned, I think, by any reflecting reader, that there are at this very hour (our boasted civilisation notwithstanding) who would deem it a proper, nay, a *good act*, on the part of the god their busy brains have conjured up, to transfix with *his* thunderbolt, or blast with *his* lightning, the wretch who should presume to doubt *his* existence. The deistical discussers seem to overlook the important fact, that there is no more a standard of goodness than a standard of beauty, and that men are no whit nearer, if so near agreement, as to what would constitute a *good god*, than they are as to what constitutes a *good man*. This fact seems more fatal to the deistical argument—fatality greatly strengthened by the well-known truth, that thousands who have professedly, aye, and sincerely believed in one *good omnipotent creator of the universe*, have themselves acted worse than the worst fiends, the maddened brain of even a religious fanatic ever generated.

CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

GOVERNMENT PROSECUTION!

Just Published, Price 1s.

BY THE "BOY CLARKE," THE

MOCK TRIAL OF "THE MAN PATERSON,"

One of the Editors of "*The Oracle of Reason*;" being a full report, with all the seized and suppressed papers of the extraordinary Bow-street Profane Case.—Profits of the Sale devoted to the Anti-Persecution Union.

ANATOMY OF HETERODOXIES,

SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF THE "ORACLE."

I RESUME the deistical heterodoxy, that being, in the estimation of the grace-of-god and church-of-England-as-by-law-established people, the most dangerous of doxies next to the atheistical doxy. Now, I do not happen to rate the dangerousness of deism so highly, with reference to the powers that be, or the systems that be, as these same godlies. If I thought any shade or degree of deism as potent for innovation as they do, I should not take such pains to refute it. Believing their danger to be our safety, I would, on the contrary, apply myself as stoutly to the task of making deists, as I now do to that of making atheists. Deism, I am compelled to consider, after the most careful investigation, as fraught with every species of dangerous error, and as containing within itself the seeds of bitter oppression, want, and anguish to the human race. I am very far from thinking, with some liberal friends, that the deist and atheist approximate in opinion. I would be the last to contend for minor points and raise small differences, when such a vast struggle lies before us with the enemy. Deism and atheism, instead of being proximate views, are complete antipodes in opinion. One asserts the god-belief, the other the non-god-belief. One induces, maintains, perpetuates dictation, authority, subordination, orders, ranks, classes, mastership, servitude, individual ownership, and contributes largely to every social, political, and moral misery and degradation, to which the majority are invariably condemned. The other, of necessity, would, in freeing us from these tremendous curses, fit us in all respects for building up an entirely new and better system of social economics, public management, and morals. It would enable us to train the rising generation to thoroughly improved habits and judgment. Both by individual and public reform, an infinitely better series of arrangements for the general happiness might be instituted than any of which we, god-influenced as we have unfortunately been, can entertain even a faint conception. We will not then contend for a one-god belief in preference to a two-god belief—a duality of goddism before a trinity-god—or tritheism instead of polytheism. We leave these niceties to the theological straw-splitters. All minor discussions must merge, sooner or later, into the grand discussion of goddism or no goddism, and all contentions must give way before the grand contention for authority on the side of the goddists, and equality on that of the no-goddists. The goddists on the one hand, and the humanists on the other, will alone contest the field.

The deistical heterodoxy, whether set forth by a defunct periodical, an elaborate treatise, or an intelligent party, may be deemed worthy of comment, when arrayed against the atheistical heterodoxy and defended by a show of reason. The total irreconcilability of theology and naturalism, as well as the distinctive and distinguishing characteristics of religion and morality, have been already treated at length. The BINDING business may now appropriately come in for its share of criticism. The part enacted on the theological stage by the binding principle, is thus described by the ex-organ of the deists. "The end or object of every religion, ancient or modern, pagan, Jew, christian, or mahometan, is to *bind* men together by some common and generally recognised principle. The first, the most important, and most universally received of which, is the belief in a *powerful, wise, and good BEING*—called god, or any other name, who approves and rewards virtue, and disapproves and punishes vice, either in this life, or in another, or in both. This idea, or belief, is the root of all religion, and wherever, in any system, this idea is not found, there cannot be said to be religion of any kind." This is a fair sample, both in matter and manner, of the theological notions of the leading deists, and as such claims a degree of notice which the particular circumstances would not otherwise require. The usual quantum of vagueness and obscurity is distinguishable—stilted or manacled philosophy is obvious in this attempt to force companionship with religion. Blended also with the false and timid philosophy is excellent and correct description of the leading features of religion. All religions are here stated to have for their end and object to bind men together. It would, at the very threshold, be contended by many, that the binding power of religion was quite a fallacy, and that the congregating, combining, and subscribing to a common creed, was mistaken for this much vaunted binding. Then, again, it would be urged, that if religious congregations really were bound together, they took special care not only to be loosened from their fellow-beings of the laity, but from all congregations except their own. It would further be objected, that in proportion as religion entered into any tie which bound men together, by so much that tie partook of the character of exclusiveness, and induced an undue and intolerant assumption. I am not disposed to quarrel with the term binding, as one of the descriptives of religion, but I as stoutly claim it in its best sense for varieties of association, having nothing whatever to do with religion. In the above quotation, a "common and generally recognised *principle*" is asserted to be the binder. Here I materially differ, and though in a term only,

the difference involves serious consequences. I disallow the word *principle*, as wholly inapplicable to the binding here meant. A principle in conduct, in mechanics, in art, in philosophy, is readily comprehended, if not very readily defined. It is known, at any rate, to be a well-considered inference, drawn, by the inductive process, from an aggregation or series of facts or truths, and to form a code, rule, or guide, applicable under varying circumstances. What does the word mean when applied to religion? Either nothing, or something totally different. Strongly corroborative of this, is the passage above quoted. Mark, first there is the "end or object," which is "to bind," and by "some recognised principle," "the most important of which is"—what? the "belief," &c. Here, then, the principle, by a prestobegone movement, known only to theologians, is in the twinkling of an eye metamorphosed into a belief, than which nothing can be more dissimilar—the word belief being beautifully applicable to speculative bogysms—principle to philosophy, science, and morals.

Then comes "a *powerful, wise, and good BEING*, called god, or any other name." A series of such gross and untenable assumptions that none but theological dreamers, enslaved credists, or wily traffickers would assert with such self-complacent dogmatism. Assumption the first, is in the word "a"—as if a visionary speculator could positively determine whether there was one or twenty. Assumption the second, is the use of the word "powerful" as a quality, generally understood all-powerful—at the moment of granting this quality of power, another fellow, called the devil, is doing whatever he pleases, wherever he pleases, and however he pleases. Assumption the third, is "wise"—though nature is assumed by the same dogmatists to be full of contrivances, and expedients, which shows anything but wisdom in any one compelled to resort to such pitiful bunglings. Assumption the fourth, is "good"—while both inorganic and organic nature is continually displaying defects, imperfections, convulsions, compensations, disruptions, griefs, pains, miseries. Assumption the fifth, is "being"—how knows the speculatist that the supreme and all-pervading power assumed to exist is a being at all, any more than Robert Owen's power-god? Assumption the sixth, appears in the making of this supposed being reward virtue—what! reward that state deemed virtuous, which he compelled the organisation to be! And punishing crime, would, for the same reason, be assumption the seventh, as contradictory of those qualities of goodness previously asserted.

This something, which appears first as a tie or binder, then as a principle, after as a

belief—finally, as “an idea or belief,” is declared to be the root of all religion. If I knew precisely what is stated to be the root, I could definitely disagree or coincide with the proposition, but the vagueness and obscurity are so great throughout, that the meaning can only be conjectured. Gathering this meaning, that all religions hold the belief in a god, and that without this belief there could be no religion, I in this instance concur with the writer, who has decidedly expressed here what I have frequently insisted on, the impossibility of religion without god. This fully gets rid of the “to do good is my religion” notion. To do good is my morality—to believe and worship is my religion, corrects this error. A derivation next comes in to the aid of the binders—they discover, in the midst of numerous other derivations, that religion means binding, or binding again, from *re* again and *ligo* I bind. Thus the binding cannot have *begun* with religion. If religion means binding *again* it cannot mean binding—and binding, which preceded binding again, must have also preceded religion. So much for the felicity of this derivation.

“Dissoluteness, laxity, and profligacy of manners” is attributed to the ancient pagans, not that they were irreligious, not that they had not the tie, but that they did not have it tight enough. “It had very little power over them.” Well, how was it with the Jews—was it tight enough with them? What says the *Deist*? “The ancient Jewish religion, with its two more modern branches, christianity and mahometanism, exhibit a very different character from the pagan persecution—cruelty and bloodshed have marked the course of these three faiths, rather than dissoluteness of manners, although the latter have not been altogether wanting.....The spirit which characterised the christian faith, or church, or, rather, the priesthood, for these as a body constitute the church, is a grasping after power and wealth.” Well, have we any binding here? The question is but answered by the sentence immediately following. “The means by which this power is obtained and confirmed in their hands is the *faith which they bind* upon men’s consciences—teaching that obedience to the church is obedience to the will of god, and will entitle the faithful and obedient to a rich reward in heaven.” Excellent commentary upon the binding notion, and highly valuable is this branch of the theology shown to be for teaching pure morality! Listen, yet a little more, if the binding crotchet has not yet been sufficiently and suicidally disposed of. “The church of Rome was a politico-theological corporation of immense power, prior to the protestant reformation. By religion, or the binding

principle, the foundation of this power was laid—the power being acquired by the priesthood, gave a further means to draw the bond tighter and tighter, till at length it broke, and the protestant reformation, with the ‘right of private judgment burst upon the astonished world.’” Of all bindings in the whole circle of ties, cords, and nooses, defend me, after this, from the religious or rebinding process. “Since the reformation,” he adds, “the operation has been in an opposite direction, that is, a loosening process has been going on, the ultimatum of which is atheism.” It is only now that we are beginning to breath freely.

The striking off the bonds completely has been reserved for the ultimatum atheism!

M. Q. R.

LIFE, DEATH, AND CHARACTER OF RICHARD CARLILE.

As no remarks on the above subject have appeared in the *Oracle*, I trust that these few will find a place. It is not proper that the subject of this notice should be consigned to oblivion, after all he has done and suffered to encourage freedom of thought, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press, and through these means to destroy political and religious tyranny in every shape and form. That he has done more for mental liberty than any other man, few will be inclined to dispute—in fact, none will dispute it, who are acquainted with the struggles of his eventful and really useful life.

In the works of R. Carlile may be found information on every department of political and moral science, stated with a boldness never equalled by any who had *preceded* him. In the volumes of the *Republican*, more especially, we may find masterly essays, in considerable numbers, on the follies, errors, and evils, of theological delusions—essays that are worthy of being printed and circulated in a separate form—essays that would do more to destroy supernaturalism, if generally read, than nine-tenths of the productions that have been written during the last ten years. Carlile did not, in all cases, write these essays, but his example encouraged others to do so, and it was he who gave them to the world, although he knew, at the time, that publishing them would increase the term of his imprisonment. In his excellent work, the *Moralist*, he has collected the good things that are to be found in the Jew-book, placed them in a position to be compared with the sentiments of Pagan moralists, and thus done much to show that morality is not borrowed from the bible alone, as many foolish bigots affirm. In the *Lion* Carlile has done much to destroy christianity in its external evidences, by the publication of Taylor’s articles on that subject, and, above all, by his re-

THE ORACLE OF REASON.

peated challenges to the clergy to discuss the matter in dispute—proving, beyond a doubt, that these men are either well-acquainted with the thorough rottenness of their system, or of their own incapability to defend it. The clergy hated him for this with a truly christian hate—no language has been too vile for them to use respecting him, no insinuation too base for them to urge, to create against him a feeling of disgust, and thus cause his opinions to be rejected by those who paid attention to theological instructions. Many times have they predicted that his would be a horrible death, and have looked forward to that period to atone for the annoyance he gave them by his exertions to destroy their system. I can fancy their mortification at finding that Richard Carlile on his dying bed was the same man in his hatred of superstition, as he was when, from his dungeons, he hurled his mental arrows against them, in defiance of all they could say and do to prevent him.

Admitting that a competitive democracy is the best state of human society, Carlile was a first-rate politician, and has undoubtedly done much to promote liberality of sentiment on political science. Carlile's life was a series of struggles for the attainment of his objects. In all cases he met with the most determined opposition. This seemed, by its long continuance, to have had an injurious effect upon his disposition, and made him sometimes dip his pen in gall, and when he did so, it mattered not to him whether it was friend or foe he attacked. What he did think he wrote without reservation—hence it was that he became so frequently involved in personal disputes. It would have been better for his fame had he never forgot, in his written controversies, the courtesies of life. Let us, however, rejoice for the service he has done, imitate his good qualities, and bury in the tomb all his failings. May we soon have many others to continue and bring to a successful close the work he so well begun. That the *Oracle* may be instrumental in calling many new, ardent, and talented successors of Carlile into the field, is the desire of
AN EX-SOCIAL MISSIONARY.

NOTICE.

"Hydrocephalus Higgs." This gentleman, whose communication ought to have been noticed before, sends us a poem, entitled the "Apple, a Legend of Paradise; translated from the Egyptian of Cornelius Coppernose." An apology is offered for the apparent neglect of this favour. The conductors of the *Oracle* promise more attention to correspondents in future. What does Hydrocephalus Higgs take us to be? Men whose anti-religious nerves were forged in brass by Vulcan himself? Was his poem inserted, the *Oracle* readers would certainly faint and forget to pay their penny for the number—from which misfortune we should never recover, if they did from their fit. Just to hint how they would be "shocked," the sixteenth stanza is inserted. Eve has spoken in her own and Adam's defence to "his lordship," the landlord of the garden, to very little

purpose and this is the poet's account of her boasted eloquence:—

"Alas! 'twas vain she spoke, the thing was done,
My lord grew angry and refused to listen;
And sternly ordered them to cut and run,
When Eve's soft eyes began to glare and glisten.
'Is this your justice,' she again begun,
'To sack us in this destitute condition?
Adam, get up, my cock, it's no use kneeling,
I'm damn'd if this old brute has common feeling.'"

There is a rich vein of wit running through the whole, but the writer will remember there are some passages which render the poem unfit for insertion in the *Oracle*.

Will "Omnipax" favor us with his name and address?

Received "Christian Lying, *alias* Methodist Impudence," by an Ex-Social Missionary.

THEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, *Bailey's Coffee House, 42, New Compton-street, Soho*—To Inquire into the origin of the Religious Idea—Religious Systems—Modes of Worship—their Origin—Progress—Present State and Prospects—with a view to the discovery and promulgation of Truth, and the overthrow of Error.

On Tuesday Evening, April 4th, 1843, and the two following Tuesday evenings, will be delivered three lectures in the above rooms, by members of this association, as follows—

Lecture 1. "Christianity: A Blessing or a curse?" By Mr. M. Ryall.

Lecture 2. On Tuesday, April 11th, "The New System of Pantheism, as the basis of a New Organisation of Society." By Mr. G. Loskin.

Lecture 3. On Tuesday, April 18th, "On the Absolute Truth of the Doctrines of the New Testament, and the Character of its Founder Vindicated." By Mr. C. J. Smith.

Admission Free. To commence at half-past eight. Discussion to follow at the close of each lecture.

RELEASE OF MR. C. SOUTHWELL.

FROM the great satisfaction which attended the last representation; the Committee for Mr. C. Southwell are induced to announce a second amateur performance in aid of the yet incomplete fund, to take place at the Rotunda, Blackfriars-road, on Tuesday, April 11; for which occasion, the following selections are respectfully submitted:—The performance to commence with Shakspeare's Tragedy of *Othello*; *Othello*, Mr. C. Southwell; after which the laughable farces of *Turning the Tables*, and the *Rendezvous*. The Shareholders are respectfully requested to do the utmost in their power to fill the house, and thereby get the full amount of their shares returned; there not being sufficient on the last occasion to clear all expenses, although a full house. The Committee being desirous to give every one an opportunity of seeing Mr. Southwell's talents as a dramatic performer, have resolved on reducing the prices of admission, which will be 1s. the pit, and 1s. 6d. the boxes. No money taken at the Rotunda, and admission to be had by tickets only, which may be obtained at the following places—

Mr. Watson, 5, Paul's Alley, Paternoster Row; Mr. H. Edwards, 10, Black Lion Yard, Whitechapel; S. Houghton, 7, Commercial Place, Whitechapel; T. Harwood, 19, Oxford-street, Whitechapel; H. Hetherington, Fleet-street; Mr. Pitt, grocer, 40, Prince's-street, Portman Market; Crown Coffee House, Edgeware-road; Hudson's Coffee House, Charles-street, Covent Garden; Mr. Siddons, gun maker, Lower Sloan-street, Chelsea; Mr. Goodacre, Church street, Kensington; Mr. Hill, Horner-street Crawford-street; Mr. Hudson, Dolphin Tavern, Hungerford Market; and at all the Social Institutions in London. The performance to commence precisely at seven o'clock.

Printed and Published by THOMAS PATERSON, No. 46, Wych-street, Strand, London, to whom all Communications should be addressed.

Saturday, April 1, 1843.

THE ORACLE OF REASON:

Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE."

EDITED BY "THE MAN PATERSON,"

Sentenced, on January 27, 1843, by Mr. Jardine, of Bow-street, to Three Months' Imprisonment in Tothill Fields Prison, for exhibiting Profane Placards at No. 8, Holywell-street, Strand, London.

No. 69.] *Originally Edited by CHARLES SOUTHWELL, sentenced, on January 15, 1842, by Sir Charles Wetherall, to Twelve Months' Imprisonment in Bristol Gaol, and to pay a fine of £100, for Blasphemy, contained in No. 4.* [PRICE 1D.]

Second Editor, G. J. HOLYOAKE, sentenced, on August 15, 1842, by Mr. Justice Erskine, to Six Months' Imprisonment in Gloucester Gaol, for Blasphemy at Cheltenham.

PROPHECIES.

THE *Oracle of Reason* will, from time to time, under the above title, interpret the sacred mysteries, without profanity. Types, allegories, prophecies, will meet with explanation, which will redound to the honour of an omniscient creator, who, in a written revelation, has provided, humanly speaking, for the most unforeseen occasion. Our first instance will be his knowledge of the *a posteriori* argument. When Moses wished to hear a demonstration of the deity, and to be a witness to the actual fact of his presence, god would not comply with his wishes and show him his glory, but very significantly told him to look at his back parts. The *a posteriori* reasoners have ever since taken this back-sided view of nature and nature's god, and would argue from their disgusting observations, the design and the designer of the whole. Hellespont-Bridgwater—going much beyond the doings of Xerxes—would lay a *pons asinorum*, or bridge of asses, over the ocean of infinity, its eight arches built by professors, adepts in such architecture, who have brought their materials exclusively from the *a posteriori* quarter.

The *a priors*, who would see right before, cry out against the degradation of the means, which would account for his glory. Certainly, from an intimate acquaintance with man's behind, and that part only, disembodied intelligence could not infer the superiority of the rest of the human frame.

The christians, on the other hand, say the back parts seen by Moses, were but a type of the imperfect nature of the law given to the Jewish legislator—a representation of the Jewish dispensation superseded by the christian, and signified but a part of the entire scheme. The adoption of the most undignified part of humanity—the Israelitish people—was politely allegorised to Moses, before the comprehension of the whole of mankind in the plan of universal redemption, and the full presence of the almighty

—when communion with one member was to be exchanged for partnership with the whole body, so that man might gobble up his creator, and eject him by the *a posteriori* process. In a word, Moses's view of the back parts was a type of man, with all the consequences of original sin, seeking intercourse with a holy and offended god, before propitiation was made for his guilt. When Jesus Christ took the human nature upon him, man was accordingly admitted into the presence of his creator, face to face. To which orthodox views we may add, that the back parts probably explained the state of the Jews in the Pentateuch, when not made acquainted with a future state. That was, indeed, a back view of nature to blush at, compared with the magnificent frontispiece in prospect—the revelation of annihilation in the excremental destruction of matter compared to the blessed hope of immortality. Still more extraordinary than the wheel-about-turn-about of god almighty could have been, would be the dead turned into the living, and walking out of their graves, "the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting." No doubt this retrospective revelation was the fundamental principle of Bishop Butler's analogy. That great work in support of christianity, argued from the very difficulties observable in nature, and the forbidding aspect under which god showed himself to mankind, that written revelation must present the same obstacles to their belief. Christians appeal with truth to this book, as having created a tremendous rumpus amongst unbelievers, and particularly atheists—and its want of intelligibility bears a striking analogy to god's evidence of himself in his back parts, and demonstrates to every candid mind that it must have been written under divine inspiration. Those who assert the superiority of faith over reason, might point out the "evidence of things unseen from things seen," that faith would conjecture what was before from what was behind, whilst sceptics demanded

VOL. II.

as the first condition full conformity to reason, which god would not grant even to the modest request of Moses. The Puseyites would say it was exoteric—when there was an esoteric meaning, it was the reserve proper to be observed with sacred things, before admittance of noviciates to the perfect glory of god's revelation. The secret parts, and those the least becoming, properly personified the mysteries of religion in their outward appearance to the world. The Roman catholics might say it was prophetic of the sacrament allegorically offered to Moses in the holy wafer—it was a type of the bread, and not the wine, the solid, and not the liquid, which union heretics only partake of in the holy communion. In conclusion, when god put his hand before his back parts, as he is represented to have done, it seemed very significant of a mark of contempt, which savages and the vulgar use when they there place their hands. The whole proceeding was a knock-down blow to Moses, and all presumptuous infidels—the fist of the almighty drove him into a corner, and closed up his peepers, as the arguments of believers act upon the sceptics, so that “seeing they do not see.” Thus it will ever be with those unhappy beings, neither in this life or the other will they ever see more of their god. Their hereafter will be in hell, the back parts of his omnipresence, the torments of the damned will probably be discharged from that source, and they will eternally grope in the common shores of the realms below. If they ever raise their eyes, it will be to look upon the awful spectacle of vengeance above, when they might have enjoyed everlasting rest in the bosom of their creator. It was a sign of the disrespect we show to god, the disrespect we entertain of his doctrines. The fingers of god, in the hand held behind, a mark of the contempt he has for us, and all our speculations, as the boys in the streets do, when they join their fingers before their noses, and say, “I wish you may get it.” Such was the answer of god to the inquiry of Moses in the Jew-book. W. J. B.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING HERALD

SIR.—*Punch* has said, that a sure proof of Mc Naughten's insanity, was the fact of his taking in your journal. This I think is no fair test of monomania, although it may account for the fellow-feeling you displayed for him in your soporific paper. I am inclined to think, with the majority, that the most incontestible proof of insanity, was his shooting the secretary instead of the master—had he any political object in view, which apparently he had not. You state that his madness consisted in destroying persons under a delusion, and therefore that he ought to be secured from doing farther harm—to this I agree, and would put the public on their guard against a personage who, according to your paper, is a more dangerous lunatic. But here are

your own words, “Our laws are formed for the protection of those unfortunate beings whom the almighty has, in his inscrutable wisdom and for his own wise purposes afflicted with delusions dangerous to their fellow-creatures.” How anxiously I have endeavoured, by placards and otherwise, to convey so true a notion of the Jew-god as you have done in a short paragraph, Messrs. Jardine, Chambers, and Maule can tell. My feeble pen could not depict the irrational, ferocious, and malicious monster, yclept god, whom superstitious mortals tremblingly adore, so well as you have done. “Imitate god,” is a favourite cuckoo-cry with the pious, and as soon as a Mc Naughten does imitate him, the cry is, “he is mad, and must be taken care of”—just so, but it surely follows that his maker is likewise mad. Then why not denounce the cause at least equally with the effect? A god forming madmen to destroy their fellows—and we labouring by laws to preserve them, would seem rather ludicrous to an uninterested spectator, who at the same time knew we were always praising the wisdom, goodness, and justice of this same god, and at the same time acting as if we were always right and he invariably wrong.

Now god is either right in forming these madmen to destroy us “for his own wise purposes,” or he is not—if he is not, and we always act on that assumption, why not, as I stated on my trial, “hurl him from his seat” and make Jesus regent during his insanity, with the pigeon as his assistant, with power to add to their number?

Surely, Mr. Editor and contemporary, if mad christians are thought to be dangerous beings, and I have had solid proofs lately that they are, a mad and frantic god is no less so, and I have no reason to doubt your word for his madness. McNaughten is looked upon as a monster for shooting a stranger—but god butchered his own son, and thousands of mortals are daily sacrificed to satisfy his sanguinary appetite, but I suppose with gods as with men,

“One murder makes a villain,
Millions a hero.”

To some of your readers, not to yourself, I may appear to treat this matter with levity, but I was never more serious in my life, and it gives me pleasure to have the co-operation of the *Herald* in so laudable an undertaking as that of exposing the model-god of christianity—a being whose image is the signal of terror, madness, and cruelty, and serves as the pretext for the most shameful violation of the moral duties.

Utility is the only rule by which we can test the actions of either human beings or gods—if they produce happiness to us, we should consider them worthy our esteem—if useless, we ought to despise them—if pernicious, as you have proved those of Jehovah to be, we of course ought to hold them in detestation, in proportion to the magnitude of the evils they inflict on us. I shall be most happy to co-operate with the *Herald* in exposing the villainies, debaucheries, and fooleries of that “concentration of abominations”—the Jew-god—after which we will effectually hang his son, and finally close our christian-god war, by having a shot at the pigeon.

Yours, truly,

T. P.

THEORY OF REGULAR GRADATION.

XXXII.

(Mammalia continued.)

THE pelvis, or basin-like cavity, is situated at the inferior part of the trunk. The walls of the human pelvis are very strong, and formed by four bones. In the fœtus, however, each of the bones consists of several portions, and there are then no less than fifteen bones entering into the formation of this cavity. It has been remarked, that in the

human skeleton alone, a true pelvis is to be found. This arises from the form and manner of connection of the bones entering into the formation of this cavity. The chimpanse and elephant afford us the nearest approach to the human formation, even here the ilia are narrow and elongated, and the sacrum and coccyx are flat, contracted, and continued in a direct line with the spine. The sacrum is a single and symmetrical bone, placed in the posterior part of the pelvis—it was called the “sacred bone” by the ancients, from its contiguity to the organs of generation. The coccyx, so called from its supposed resemblance to a cuckoo’s beak, is a small triangular bone, attached by its base to the apex of the sacrum. Next in the order of development may be ranked the rhinoceros, the ox, the horse, the carnivora, and the rhodentia. The cetacea present but slight rudiments of a pelvis, in the form of two small bones, united to each other and to one of the vertebræ by cartilage. Finally, the marsupial animals present a small, elongated pelvis especially remarkable for the presence of two particular bones, not found in any other mammiferous animal, even in a rudimentary state, and named ossa marsupialia. The use of these bones is to support the marsupium, or abdominal pouch, in which the mammary apparatus is lodged, and the young animal nurtured.

The tibia, so called from tibia, a pipe or flute, because the first of these instruments are said to have been made from the leg-bones of animals, is the longest and largest bone of the leg, and, with the exception of the femur, it is the longest in the skeleton. It occupies the inner and fore-part of the leg, and is placed in a vertical position beneath the femur, from which it receives the weight of the trunk, and transmits it to the arch formed by the bones of the tarsus. The fibula, so called from its fancied resemblance to a Roman clasp (fibula, a clasp), is a long, slender bone, occupying the outer side of the leg—it is about the same length as the tibia. Throughout the mammalia the tibia and fibula is analagous to the ulna, and is found only in a rudimentary state in the solipeds and ruminants, as the latter bone was in these animals. In the solipeds, the fibula is applied to nearly the upper half of the outer surface of the tibia, being pretty large above, and ending in a fine point below.

The tarsus, or first division of the foot, consists of seven bones, which are much larger and stronger than those of the carpus, and, by their union with each other, form an arch, which is broader anteriorly than posteriorly, convex from before backwards, and from side to side, and articulated superiorly and posteriorly with the tibia and fibula. The bones composing this part of the foot in the mammalia, for the greater part resem-

ble those of man. The bats present a remarkable peculiarity in the formation of a long, slender bone, extending from the back of the os calcis half way to the tail, and enclosed within the flying membrane. Cuvier and Meckel supposed it to be a portion of the os calcis, whilst Daubeton conceived it to be a distinct bone. On the inner side of the tarsus of the mole, a sickle-like process of bone is found similar to that observed on the carpus.

The metatarsus and toes in ruminants and solipeds are disposed pretty nearly as in the anterior extremities. The rodentia and carnivora have usually five toes, the great one being often shortened, or as in cats, dogs, and hares altogether absent. The quadrumana and marsupiales have the great toe separated from the rest, bearing the same relation to the foot as the thumb to the hand.

The following are Camper’s measurements of an ourang-outang, compared with those of man:

	MAN.	OURANG.
Whole length of the body from vertex to heel	71in.	Less than 30in.
Superior extremity ..	32	“ 24 $\frac{1}{2}$
Inferior ditto.....	39	“ 16
Humerus	13	“ 8 $\frac{1}{2}$
Ulna.....	9 $\frac{7}{8}$	“ 9
Hand	8 $\frac{1}{4}$	“ 7
Thumb	4 $\frac{1}{4}$	“ 1 $\frac{1}{4}$
Middle finger	4 $\frac{1}{4}$	“ 3
Femur	20	“ 7
Tibia	16 $\frac{3}{4}$	“ 7
Foot	10 $\frac{1}{2}$	“ 7 $\frac{1}{2}$
Middle toe	2 $\frac{1}{4}$	“ 2 $\frac{1}{4}$

The following characteristics peculiar to man, are from Evers’s “Compendium of Comparative Anatomy,” to which I am indebted for many of the details of structure which I have given:

“Biped; bimanous; erect attitude; great proportion in the size of the cranium over that of the face; development of brain; direction of facial line; articulation of the head with the spine; rational; endowed with speech; prominent chin, and teeth of peculiar characters; absence of ligamentum nuchæ and intermaxillary bone; great transverse measurement of the chest; curved spine, sacrum, and coccyx; large pelvis; short arms; long, powerful thumb, possessing separate flexors; length and direction of the neck of the femur; depth of internal condyle; the whole flat of the foot resting on the ground, and the leg joining it at a right angle. Man is also remarkable for the smoothness of his skin, and the slowness of his growth.”

I promised, in No. 59, to give a table of various scientific terms used in describing skeletons, with their literal meanings, and I copy the following from “A Practical Demonstration of the Human Skeleton,” by G. Elkington, a scientific work plainly written:

THE ORACLE OF REASON.

TABLE OF THE PROCESSES OF THE BONES.

The articular processes are sub - divided into	Those which belong to the moveable articulations, which are called	Heads, when hemispherical. Condyles, when broader in one direction than in others. Serræ or dentations, as in the bones of the cranium. Roots, as in the teeth. Ridges, as in those articulations called schyn- dylesis.
	And those which belong to the immoveable articulations, which are called	Tuberosities, eminences which are rounded and rough. Prominences, when rounded and smooth. Tubercles, small roughened eminences. Lines, unequal eminences, long, narrow, and not very prominent. Crests, resembling lines, but more prominent. Impressions, irregular eminences, formed by the aggregation of a number of small tubercles.
The nonarti- cular process- es are sub- divided into those destined for	The inser- tion of fibrous organs, whose points of attachm ^t they multi- ply and wh. are named	According to their general form, as
		After the bo- dies to which they have been comprd.
		According to their uses, as
		According to their direc- tion and rela- tive position, as
And into those	The reflection of certain tendons, which deviate from their original direction which are termed	Spinous processes, when in the form of a spine. Styloid, resembling a style. Coracoid, like a crow's beak. Odontoid, like a tooth. Mastoid, like a nipple. Trochanters, which are subservient to the act of turning. Orbitar, belonging to the orbit. Nasal, belonging to the nose.
	Which correspond to cavi- ties existing on the surface of certain organs, which are called	Ascending processes. Vertical. Transverse, &c. Processes of reflection. Processes of impression.

TABLE OF THE CAVITIES AND DEPRESSIONS OF THE BONES.

The articular cavities are called		Cotyloid, when they are hemispherical. Glenoid, when they are broad and shallow. Trochleæ, when grooved like pulleys. Facets, when nearly plain. Alveoli, when of a conical figure. Fossæ, when the entrance is wider than the bottom.
	Of reception, wh. are called	Sinuses, when it is narrower.
The nonarti- cular cavities are sub-divid. into those	Of insertion, called	Depressions, which are wide, irregular, and superficial.
	Of impression, which are called	Grooves, gutters, and channels, and corres- pond to arteries, veins, &c.
	Of transmission, which are named	Notches, when superficial and situated at the margins of the bones. Foramina, or holes, when they pass through a bone. Canals or aqueducts, when their passage is of considerable extent.
	Of nutrition, which transmit the nutritive vessels	Clefts, or fissures, when long and narrow. To the medullary canal of the long bones. To the spongy texture of the short, and ends of the long bones.
		To the compact tissue.

"The last class of non-articular cavities is divided into three orders, according to the different tissues which are supplied by the vessels they transmit. Those of the *first order* are peculiar to long bones; they transmit the nutritious artery of the medullary membrane, and are few in number, being only one to each bone. They enter the medullary canal obliquely, and run from above downwards in the humerus; from below upwards in the ulna and radius; in the lower extremity this order is reversed, and they run from below upwards in the femur; from above downwards in the tibia and fibula. They are generally on that side of the bone which corresponds to the angle of flexion. Those of the *second order* are very numerous; they transmit the vessels which supply the cellular tissue, and are, consequently, most abundant in the short, and in the extremities of the long bones. The *third order* transmit the nutritive vessels of the compact tissue; they consist of a multiplicity of small pores, which are most numerous in the middle of the long bones, and in those of the cranium. They are more numerous, too, in young than in aged subjects: being gradually obliterated by the increased deposition of earthy matter which then takes place."

THE WORTH OF MIND.

Common sense will admit the propriety, the benefit of cultivating the mind, but never at the expense of the body, human nature would not submit to it, then why, in the name of reason, should it be enforced in the teeth of all that is opposed to it?—Lord LONDONDERRY.

THE above is a just sentiment, and consistently carried out into general practice, would effect a very beneficial change in man's social condition. The *Times*, of course, sneered at it, and contemned its author. The tactics of the *Times* are, however, to mould men's opinions in favour of ghostly preachments, and to maintain in *becoming* subordination the incitements of the flesh and the devil. Spiritualisms, and the pre-eminence accorded them, have been, and continue to be, the curses of mankind, and the main, if not the only source of our social and political evils. The fallacies which at present obtain in society, are innumerable—in religion, in law, in politics, in philosophy, the whimsies of this or that man's brain, pass current with the multitude, as the outpourings of unapproachable wisdom—are held as lights for all future time, and worshipped as oracular truths, as axiomatic testimony. Assuming to know, and affecting a capability of explaining everything, men carefully conceal from their fellows the fact, that little is in reality understood by any. The humble student in science aims to learn all that is known of nature and its

operations, and having in some sort accomplished this, he discovers what has hitherto been concealed from him, the fact that the known is to the unknown as one to infinity, and even the known, taught and re-taught as it is, is oft discarded as fallacious, to be replaced by other teaching equally so. Look, for example, at the, in many respects, estimable philosophy of Epicurus, held and taught for ages with the most submissive devotion by his disciples—let us compare with each other the three following passages: "A wise man will embrace such tenets, and only such, as are built upon experience, or upon certain and indisputable axioms." "Because the world is a finite portion of the universe, it must be terminated, and have some figure, but what this is, *it is impossible to discover.*" "The doctrine that there are upon the earth antipodes is therefore false. The earth *is in form a circular plane.*" As in ancient philosophy, so in modern law—the dictum of a judge that christianity is part and parcel of the law of England, has long passed current, but the truth of which is only now challenged—so in physic, so in religion. But of all the fallacies which have become, as it were, interwoven with the very texture of our being, there is no one so fraught with evil to the many, as that which supposes the mental portion of man's being to be superior or more noble than the material. The encouragement given to this notion by the unreflecting, has been the greatest bane of man's existence, and the discarding of which would tend more than any other thing to accelerate the progress of man to that state of happiness we all delight to dream of. What is my object in thus writing?—is it to cast aside as valueless the sublime or beautiful in nature? Certainly not, but to heighten man's appreciation of the true. What, though we experience a species of intoxication by perusing a Milton, a Shakspeare, a Byron, or in listening to the eloquent exercise of the human voice in speech or song, or sit enraptured by the delicious melody of instrument, or woodland chorister?—what, though nature and art combine their attractive stores to win our admiration, by their appeals to the senses?—shall we so wrong our faculties of reason, so lightly estimate our sober judgments, as to declare that these are better than the air we breathe, the food and drink which qualify our organs for their several uses? Yet do we, in effect, say this, when we say man's mind is nobler, better than his body. I deem it more a fault of words than of intention—yet the heedless employment of cant phraseology is equally mischievous, and this in question is one of the many with which we are drugged into torpor by the priests' lust of dominion—it is one enjoined by priestly knaves, and

fostered by ourselves for lack of thought, and gives pre-eminence to bibles, churches, and all religious fooleries. Taught as we have been, that mind gave birth to matter, its higher value thus obtained so long. But we who now feel conscious of the opposite, who hold it as an axiom, that without matter mind is not, it behoves us to put off the old man, Jehovah, mind, or nothing, from its high pedestal, and let its parent, matter, take precedence—or, if thought equal, co-eternal, let them equal reign, nor let the word superior hold its charm again to sway the destiny of man. As in the extract at the head of this article, I do not in the least underrate the value of education, but must insist upon a sound physical condition first—let education wait on that, and let us not, as now, distribute books and prate of education, while many suffer agonising deaths for want of food.

CHARLES DENT.

THE FREE INQUIRER'S WHY AND BECAUSE.

WRITTEN BY CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

XIV.

(Continued from page 93.)

THERE is another class of facts about which we have not the slightest degree of scepticism, as they are supported by irresistible evidence, and do not clash with those which are mathematical, and therefore positive, nor those which are analogical, or founded upon experience. For example, there are many millions of persons who have never seen America, yet not one of the millions have the slightest doubt of the existence of such continent—and yet it is not a positive nor analogical fact, but founded upon evidence which is the most convincing, but which is still only evidence, and might be untrue. The first class of facts, the positive, extort our consent, we cannot withhold it, when we are acquainted with them—the second, which are analogical, are founded upon our experience of cause and effect—whilst the last class of facts, are founded upon evidence or hearsay, and are only to be received with caution, and never when they clash with the other two—nevertheless, to withhold our assent from any assumed fact, when attested by competent and credible witnesses, would betray an undue degree of scepticism on our part. The true philosopher, says Sir John Herschel, “is prepared to believe all things not unreasonable (that is, contrary to analogy) and to hope all things not impossible” (that is contrary to positive facts). When, therefore, we say that it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be at the same time, we state a positive fact, and our statement is called an abstract truth, that is, independent and

unfettered by any conditions, and necessarily true—whereas, in the physical sciences where certainty reaches its highest point, short of abstract truth, we have no other support or guide than experience, and our full confidence in the consistency and harmony of nature—whilst hearsay or evidence never reaches beyond the highest degree of probability, and should ever be discarded when opposed to abstract or analogical truths. It may also be remarked, that even in matters of physical science the majority of mankind rely upon the testimony of credible witnesses. Who is there, says a modern writer, acquainted generally with modern physics, that doubts the existence of the remarkable phenomena attending the interference of light?—among which may be mentioned the fact, that two rays of light falling on the same object may obliterate each other, and produce darkness; while by intercepting either, the other will acquire its illuminating power. Yet this is an effect extremely difficult to reproduce, and probably of the whole number of persons who give it, as a fact, their undoubting confidence, there is not one in fifty thousand who has himself actually witnessed it, or who could, if he would, reproduce it. We are sometimes said to reason abstractedly, or to have the power of abstraction, by which is meant that we think apart, and, as it were, feed upon our own thoughts, combining, separating, and recombining the ideas which sensations have excited, and draw general conclusions or principles therefrom, called abstract truths, which we have noted above. To compare a great with a small tree, is an act of reason—but to call up our ideas, when the objects which first excited them are absent, and make them, like armies, pass in review—or to conjure up, by an effort of our own, such combinations as are not to be found in nature, as to imagine a man with the claws and wings of a dragon—or to conceive new ideas by the force of our own thoughts, is to reason abstractedly, or separate from all contingent or accidental circumstances. Hence, abstraction is generally more or less painful, according to the complexity or difficulty of the subject considered, much thought causing undue activity in the brain, which is so rended and torn, that it is speedily exhausted—which truth the ancients have shadowed forth when they observe, that after the muses have given over their riddles to Sphinx—that is, to practice, which urges and impels to action, choice, and determination—then it is that they become torturing, severe, and trying, and unless solved and interpreted, strangely perplex and harass the human mind. The expression of Shakspeare, “cudgelling our brains,” is very apt, as expressive of what we really do whenever we reason abstractedly.

Men are said to reason upon principle, when their conclusions are drawn from facts, or assumed facts—for of those whose conclusions are drawn from wild imaginings, it has been well observed, that their only principle is to have no principle. It is a principle with the people of Madagascar to raise a temple to the devil, or bad spirit, whilst god, or the good spirit, is so good that he don't require prayers to induce him to do what is right, and therefore they offer up no prayers to him. The same principle is held by the Mingrelians, and others, who particularly honour those powers which have reputation for cruelty. It is a principle with the people of Europe to do just the reverse—but the principle of them all is to offer up prayers to the powers they expect to obtain something from—thus they give prayers that they may get something solid and substantial, in the true commercial spirit. By principle, then, is meant the conclusion at which the mind arrives. A false principle is a wrong conclusion drawn from facts, or a right conclusion drawn from fancies. A true principle is a right conclusion from facts, and is called a principle on the ground of its importance. Some principles are called fundamental, because they form the basis or foundation of physical and moral science. For example, it is the fundamental principle of social science, that human beings are what they are, what they are made to be, that their characters individually, and in the mass, are results of the organisation given to them by their parents, and the circumstances or influences which act upon them through every moment of their existence. The simple facts from which this great and truly fundamental principle is deduced are innumerable, and therefore no more to be counted than the sands on the sea shore, or the leaves of an African forest.

(To be continued.)

RIGHTS.

[The following prettily written article on the "Philosophy of *Rights*," is deserving of wide circulation. Few words are repeated with more vehemence and less propriety than the little word *right*. In the ran-cour of parties and the violence of political dispute, too little attention is generally paid to patient inquiry, sober reasoning, and correct definition. A small portion of these occasionally is really very good—it acts like salt in the sea of opinion—it gives freshness and promotes health. To our tyro political friends, who may not have seen it—the following article will be read with interest.—
ED. OF O.]

We are probably all of us in the habit of frequently talking of our *rights*, and yet very few of us may at all have considered what

we mean by the word. We suppose that that there is no difficulty about it, and this satisfies us. Some talk of the natural right of every man to a vote in the election of members of parliament. We hear much from others of the rights of industry, which mean, we believe, that the labouring classes are *entitled* (but the foundation of the title we know not—we suppose it means that the thing is reasonable and good) to a certain proportion of the produce of their industry, or to the enjoyment, in return for their labour, of a certain degree of comfort. There are also the rights of the poor, which include an absolute claim to subsistence from the land upon which they have happened to be born; and there are many other alleged rights which it would be needless and tedious to enumerate. We may perhaps judge from those mentioned what is the meaning of the term. When it is asserted that every man has a right to the elective franchise, what is it precisely that it is intended to maintain? Is it that it belongs to him by the ancient laws and institutions of the country? But then, supposing this capable of historical proof, no one will be so absurd as to maintain that ancient laws have any inherent or prescriptive authority; it remains to be proved, that the changes by which the right has been limited have not been made in a constitutional manner, and are not desirable in themselves; and, after all, no ground would be established for men's exercising the pretended right; it would only be shown by one kind of argument, that it would be a good or right thing that the legislature should confer the right of universal suffrage. When so conferred, it would be a right in an intelligible sense. The right to vote would then be like the right to lands and houses, a something established by law, and which the governing powers of the country guarantee to all its inhabitants. But you tell me that you mean more than this; there may be bad laws, but rights still exist—and to contend for them where they are not recognised by authority, is the glorious work and duty of the friends of freedom. Then it must be supposed, that, by rights, you mean principles or institutions which (i. e. in your opinion) are right and good; but you cannot pretend to infallibility, or claim to impose your judgment upon others. No doubt, among political institutions, some are better than others. There is but one end and purpose which can be admitted, the production of the greatest amount of general happiness. Some institutions very obviously, as we think, are opposed to this purpose; others promote it very rudely and imperfectly. What would *really* be the best plan for accomplishing the object is *right*, and ought to be established; but how is it to be known? Each man thinks his own view the true one—and only continued discussion, leading to general

agreement, can settle the question. The right, when perceived and admitted by large numbers, can only prevail either by means allowable according to existing institutions, in which case it regularly becomes, as the result of discussion, a legal and constitutional right; or by a forcible substitution for a system which is opposed to it, in which case success makes the difference between treason and exalted patriotism. This latter method may be necessary in some extreme cases; but one actuated by virtuous and benevolent motives, not to say any one possessed of a tolerable share of prudence, would be careful not to employ it until the principles which it was proposed to establish had really secured the approbation of a great, and the most important, portion of society, so that the change might be made *forcibly* indeed, but without prolonged contest and bloodshed.

It seems, then, that, as what is really best—the abstract right—cannot be infallibly known to mortals, right in this sense is a *matter of opinion*. Every one may promote his own views by proper means; but to speak of what we think best as a *right* which must be enforced, and resistance of which is tyranny and crime, is extreme presumption and absurdity. But surely it will be thought, when we speak of the *rights of man*, we must mean something more than what we who proclaim them think good.

Those who use such expressions *imagine* that they mean something more. They mean to assert a natural claim, which all must be sensible of, to certain advantages—a claim which may properly be enforced at any time, when it is possible, and by any available means, and which it is to be accounted *tyranny* to resist; but what *they* affirm is as conscientiously denied by *others*. Opinions have hitherto varied as to the social institutions most favorable to human happiness; and if some believe in natural rights belonging to the people, others have believed quite as sincerely in natural rights belonging to the sovereign—opposition to which is a crime against the ruler of the universe. It is manifest, on the whole, that we must defend measures by *proving* them to be *good*—not satisfy ourselves by demanding them as *rights*. We must not imagine the use of that word to give any mysterious importance to what we propose.

Etymologically, *right* signifies *what is ruled or appointed*—that is, of course, by a sufficient authority—and we use the word in this sense when we talk of rights which depend on the institutions and laws of our country, and are guaranteed to us by the social system under which we live.

This is an intelligible sense of the word; but, according to it, plans which we think good, but which are not established by law, imply no rights. Another intelligible sense

of the word is *what is really good*, and would be established if men were generally wise and good: this is abstract right; but it is something to be sought out and argued upon—made the subject of reflection and discussion—not to be affirmed as known and certain, and made the foundation of claims to be enforced by any means which seem possible. Our convictions of right in this sense lead us to exert ourselves in obtaining public attention, producing arguments, appealing to right feelings, and endeavouring to create an active party, by whose means the apprehended right may speedily be admitted by legislators, and received among the benefits which the law ensures to us; but in the mean time, though we may recommend it, we cannot insist upon it; and if, through our confusion of ideas, in proclaiming it as a right, we assume that every one, whether he approves it or not, is bound to acknowledge it, we fall into a very serious error.

The truth seems to be, that very great men have occasionally talked and written much nonsense about rights; and the sooner we can free ourselves from such delusions, the better. All that is secured to us by the social institutions under which we live we have a right to, and nothing more. For the rest, what is truly good and wise ought in reason to be thus established, and the sooner it is so the better; but it can become so only by certain constitutional means. What we think good we may recommend and promote; but, until the conviction of numbers, actively exerting itself, has produced its effect, there is naught giving us any claim, or authorising any public course of action. If we consider what is established as morally wrong or naturally unjust, we may feel bound to resist it, suffering any consequences that may thence arise. We act on our convictions of moral right and real good, but we do not insist on rights; we know that, in such a case, we do not serve our cause by talking of rights.

In the instance to which, by way of illustration, we referred at the commencement of these observations, opinions differ as to what is good, equitable, and desirable; and the alleged rights only mean the *belief* of those who assert them, that such and such things are good and reasonable. Let them, then, defend their views, and show their grounds for their belief; but, in calling what they contend for rights, let them be well aware that they only express their own persuasion that such things are right. They only put forward *their opinion*, which must make its way by its reasonableness and usefulness; they must not deceive themselves, or expect to impose upon others, by the magic of the word *rights*.—*The Inquirer*.

THE ORACLE OF REASON:

Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE"

EDITED BY "THE MAN PATERSON,"

Sentenced, on January 27, 1843, by Mr. Jardine, of Bow-street, to Three Months' Imprisonment in Tothill Fields Prison, for exhibiting Profane Placards at No. 8, Holywell-street, Strand, London.

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No. 70.]

[PRICE 1D.]

RELIGION DESTRUCTIVE OF MORALITY.

Too long has it been understood, "that without religion there is no true morality"—this is the cant of theologians. All religion presupposes the existence of a god but time after time, in these columns has the frailty of the arguments for the existence of such a being been exposed, and goddites have adduced no fresh ones—but even granting them a god, what connection exists between him and us? If any, he *must be finite like us*—subject like us to pains and passions—therefore the infinity, eternity, incomprehensibility, and what-not of god vanishes, and he "becomes as one of us."

I would ask, what kind of morality can be pleasing to such a god as christians delight to honour? He is a suspicious tyrant, breathing nothing but war, blood, and carnage—a carnivorous beast, delighting in the sacrifice of animals—a lascivious and libidinous monster, who transformed himself into a bird, to debauch the virtuous or seduce the artless—whose eternal cry is revenge—whose vindictive spirit hovered with delight over the agonised body of his fanatic and misanthropic son—who now amuses himself with the sighs and groans of thousands of immolated human victims, only necessary to satisfy his sanguinary appetite! Jehovah's name is sufficient to banish goodness from the thoughts, and morality from the conduct of those who credit the existence of such a compound of inveterate depravity such as the old god of the christian trinity is represented to be.

The idea of a god is destructive to true morality. Where god is painted as a tyrant, which he certainly is in the Jew-book, he must be an object of detestation, and not of imitation, to a right-thinking mind. He is represented as cruel and interested, and men striving to imitate him, a race of tyrants are produced, who turn the earth into a hell,

likewise in imitation of their godly pattern. Men dispute and persecute one another for differences in religion, and never repent crimes committed in the name of god.

Morality is the rule of life, founded on our duties to each other, but when morality is tacked to religion, the duties of human life become subservient to an imaginary futurity. Religion weakens the relations that subsist between man and his fellows, by instilling the idea, that if he gained the favour of god by prayers and humiliations, he need not care for the favours of man—the vice or virtue of an action does not affect him, but only so far as it affects him with god. Religionists are great sticklers for punctuality in every sort of devotion, but of moral duties they have but a vague notion. They do not estimate the effect of actions by the happiness they produce—but by some fancied pleasure they may give to their god, and the precept, ascribed by some to their baby-god, to "do unto others," &c., is ostentatiously brought forth as a few minutes treat on Sundays only, under the idea, I presume, that it is too much of a good thing to be practised constantly.

Religion, in the opinion of its votaries, supersedes morals—or at least is primary in importance. The obscene and filthy Jew-book is the defender of every crime, every enormity—its disgusting and brutalising tales justify every attempt to crush mental aspiration—yet although mankind are becoming more aware of its pernicious influence, they are afraid to wholly condemn a book that has debased them.

The idea of a god is both useless and contrary to sound morality. It neither produces happiness to society nor to individuals. Suppose we believe all that christian writers say of Nero, they have represented him as a sanguinary tyrant, who tortured his victims in every conceivable manner that hellish ingenuity could invent—sensitive minds revolt at the bare recital. But Nero had some motives for his conduct—such as revenge,

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safety, example, vanity, still we loath the monster and detest his name—he is never brought forward as an example of morality, or for imitation. All mankind must admit that Nero might give reasons for his cruelty, but what reasons could be advanced for a god, who as far surpasses Nero in cruelty, and savage barbarity, as god is said to surpass men in physical power? Nero only punished for a few hours, Jehovah for eternity—Nero punished for crimes real or imagined against himself, god punished for acts which could not possibly affect him, seeing there is no relationship between finite creatures and an infinite being—Nero punished for example, but what example is the punishment of the damned to the living who do not witness it? or what example to the damned themselves, when the time for mercy is past? God, it is clear, can have no other motive for *his* vengeance than the gratification of a vindictive and brutal disposition; yet christians themselves hold up to the admiration of their children an execrable god, whose punishments are without object, and whose revenge is without end—while they decry the conduct of Nero! Let us blush for the imbecility of our race, who have so long worshipped an incarnation of the vices and depravities of themselves. This is a true picture of the christian god, stripped of the flimsy rags priests have tried to deck him in.

Religion, by trying to identify itself with morality, as a consequence has obscured it. Morality promotes our health and happiness—by it our homes are made cheerful and joyous—it smooths the path of life, and enables us to accomplish the end of our being. Religion has made unsociability a duty—witness the various sects arranged against each other in unsocial war, and it is a well known religious principle to become outrageous, when any opinion is advanced contrary to what might be considered sound doctrine—the various sects preaching love and truth have, when religion was to be served, been the veriest abettors of intolerance, and the perjured tools of a persecuting government.

Innumerable have been the evils resulting from connecting religion with morality. When the cunning or the corrupt have discovered the hollowness of all religion, they have thought virtue itself, like the Jew-god, a nonentity, and have thrown off all restraints, and the vulture eyes of the priests have not failed to trump up the evils *thus* resulting from the adandonment of religion, making a clear case for the dupes, that virtue and god-belief are inseparable. Morality and religion are essentially different. Morality invites men to love one another, to preserve their happiness—the christian religion commands men to a savage, stupid, and cruel god, a model for muderers and thieves—morality bids us consult our reason—reli-

gion says reason leads us astray—morality bids us be sociable and love our neighbour—religion bids us shun society and hate each other for god's sake—morality bids us resist shameful practices, as destructive of our happiness—religion, by being opposed to our nature, encourages and inculcates vice, but, with hateful hypocrisy, condemns at the same time that it incites. Every man who reasons is an unbeliever, for reason exposes the chimeras of theology—and shows that religion is the chief source of our calamities, and, as a consequence, that it is at variance with morality. A reasoning being cannot be incapable of his duties, or of perceiving what he owes to beings who are necessary to his happiness—and reason naturally leads him to a knowledge of the morality most essential to mankind—and what an advantage, on the side of morals, has he who reflects and reasons, to him who believes it to be right never to reason.

To what has just been said, it may be objected by deists and others, that it is only the ferocious picture of a god, as drawn in the old Jew-book, from which the evil moral influences here stated could flow—that in the new Jew-book, called testament, a better model is presented, and that the more intelligent deists set up a better model than Mary's son—and these objectors might further say, that to personify goodness alone and recommend such a person fication to mankind, must produce good impressions, just as the bad personification produced bad impressions. But I believe that it would produce, to a certain extent, the same mischief to morality if we adopt these milder deities. The attention of men would still be diverted from inquiring what is useful and good, in order to worship the abstraction set up, and morality would still have rather a fanciful than a real foundation.

It is sometimes asserted by the reverend reason-swampers, that the "*denial* of a god strikes at the root of all morality." If there was a moral certainty of a *god's* existence, such an assertion might perhaps be held valid—but this important fact has never yet been decided, not only not to convince atheists, but to convince goddites! At the present moment the goddists are as busy "as devils on a mud wall," from Brougham the head scribbler of the day, down to Mackintosh the last of the tribe, inventing new proofs of god's existence—but up to this moment "all is vanity and vexation of spirit"—they have demonstrated nothing. Like Paddy's ale, "it thickens as it clears."

According to their own logic, the belief of an *inconceivable being*—which to a moral certainty does not exist, must be likewise destructive of all morality; such is the position their own argument assumes. But does the atheist deny his own existence, or the

of other human beings? does he deny the relationship between himself and others, and those duties that must necessarily result from that relationship? No, he cannot, nor can he doubt the existence of morality, for it is the science of duties commencing from man. Therefore, although an atheist should not practice them, it does not follow that there are none. And, though a christian may sometimes love his kind better than his deity, it does not follow that a religious principle to the contrary does not exist. The atheist believing only in this life, at least wishes to be happy, and whether there exists a god or not, the moral duties of men will always be the same, so long as the nature of man is the same. I feel and another feels like me—is the foundation of all morality.

T. P.

PARLIAMENTARY CANT, AND SACRED SLANG.

But now he came to an important point, which he (Lord Ashley) thought the main feature of the question, namely, the effect this traffic must ultimately produce upon the progress of christianity and the civilisation of mankind. He (Lord Ashley) recollected well the words made use of by the right hon. and learned gentleman the member for the city of Edinburgh (Mr. Macaulay), on the debate with reference to the gates of the temple of Somnauth. In the words then uttered he entirely agreed. The right hon. member said, "every act tending to bring christianity into contempt, is high-treason against the civilisation of the human race." He (Lord Ashley) would show, by the testimony of thinking men, that opium and the bible could never enter China together. Almost the first words uttered by a native, when urged to believe in Christ, is "Why do christians bring us opium, and bring it directly in defiance of our own laws? That vile drug has poisoned my son—has ruined my brother—and well nigh led me to beggar my wife and children. Surely those who import such a deleterious substance, and injure me for the sake of gain, cannot wish me well, or be in possession of a religion that is better than my own. Go first and persuade your own countrymen to relinquish this nefarious traffic, and give me a prescription to correct the vile habit, and then I will listen to your exhortations on the subject of christianity." He (Lord Ashley) felt that by the cursed and unprincipled acts of government they had made the name of god to be blasphemed among the heathen.—*Speech of Lord Ashley, April 5, on proposing his Resolution on the Opium Trade.*

PARLIAMENT follows the types of holy writ, in orthodox Jew-book fashion, after a summary of the blessings, we are treated with the curses of christianity. Thus, in the old Jew-book, on two mountains, they were ordered to proclaim the blessings and curses of the law, and Jesus, in imitation, got upon a hillock to sound his penny-trumpet of woes and favours. Macaulay and Ashley seem to have imposed these scriptural duties upon themselves. Only when the advantages of christianity were the subject, the hearts of the elect were fired with magnificent generalities. When the reverse of the picture was presented to true believers, and facts supplied

the place of figures of speech, faith in their own heavenly perfections was turned into contemplation of the hell of their own works, and the shadows of supernatural blessings disappeared into the living forms of human curses. In the debate on the opium trade, the commons all felt too strong an interest in the question to come to a division—though on a matter of faith, or the deal boards of a rotten gate, they would speak, adjourn, divide, with all the fury of fanaticism. How lucky it is for christians that the religion of this country is *all faith*, and leaves them to the work of filling their pockets. There is no *practice* in christianity, say they, what it recommends it is impossible to perform—it is all spiritual—nothing human and material—and every day it becomes more and more a matter of faith, and leaves its devotees a law of perfect liberty, to draw from it whatever inferences as to conduct they may please to follow. Christianity is all type, all analogy, metaphor, illustration—it comes to us from its source, the east, full of orientalisms, and is, in fact, written after the style of the bombastic Somnauth proclamation. The flights of christianity are not confined to history, it rises from the earth far above our ken, and you cannot draw rules of life from such a confusion of heaven and hell. Christianity is the evidence of things unseen, and therefore it is our duty to represent it as the cause of all the good that exists, but which it never produces—and deny all the evil which we see constantly arise before our eyes from its influence. Miracles have ceased to be worked, prophecies to be spoken, the trinity to appear in person. After the lapse of years, the former *truths* of a religion grow fainter and fainter, and we should have no exercise for our faith, if we had not to believe against all appearances the glorious effects of christianity, and disbelieve its bad consequences. What more pleasing exercise of faith, what shows more the interchange of spiritual gifts between a heavenly father and his children, than to make our sins which "are as scarlet appear white as wool"—our unrighteousness, righteousness—our vices, virtues—and for us, with filial piety, to ascribe it all to him, "not unto us but unto thee, O lord, be all honour and glory given for converting evil into good, world without end, amen?"—and "wheel about, and turn about, and jump Jim Crow," say we. Does not the whole Jew-book, the basis of our religion, teach us this saving faith? god promised and swore unthought of blessings to his chosen people and the whole earth—nothing but misery has been the lot of the Israelites, and the world has remained without any change in the nature of the animals and things upon it. Did not his heavenly sponsors, the angels in heaven, universally proclaim for their god-child Jesus, "peace on earth, and good will

towards men, glory to god in the highest?" and when he came to speak, he told of nothing but woes, woes, not of peace but the sword, war to the knife here and eternal hell fire hereafter. In that he spoke truth, gave the lie to the angels, and shamed the devil, and if he has spoken hitherto so prophetically of his religion, must we not, if we believe his words, disbelieve the promises made for it in his name, and expect the same accursed consequences will ever attend its practical introduction. If infidels were not so blind, they would have seen long ago this beautiful type, this analogy, and would have received comfort from the unfolding of god's words in works, assurance of the faith from these very natural and unnatural resemblances—they would have perceived a growing revelation, and looked forward to the coming of Christ in his glory as a most unexpected event. Does he not tell us, that he will come amidst all the curses that can befall humanity, such as we have been practising in the east, and does he not tell us he will catch us when we are at rest, when we say all is peace, and we quietly go to sleep? Does he not wisely and purposely play hide and seek with our faith? A good christian is led about by god, and sees his finger in every mess. An infidel does not know how to account for anything, but in whatever happens a christian sees the reflection of christianity from heaven on earth, all things made and done on earth after its form, a perpetual fulfilment of type. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead; so that they are without excuse." (Paul to the Romans, i. 20.)

Infidels may see if they will, as well as believers, the whole history of christianity in the recent discussion on the opium trade—they will wonder at their blindness, when the similarity between the opium trade and the propagation of christianity is pointed out—and they will fall down and confess the errors of their ways before this new revelation and re-appearance of the Messiah upon earth. When we read "of our driving a trade in violation of the highest laws, and the best interests of the Chinese empire," who does not see christianity working its way against the ancient Roman empire? When we know that through its crowds of martyrs it penetrated into the imperial courts, who would not think what follows was a church history, an extract from the 15th and 16th chapters of Gibbon? "This course has been pushed so far, as to derange its currency, to corrupt its officers, and ruin multitudes of its people. The traffic has been associated, in the politics of the country, with embarrassments and evil omens; in its penal code with the axe and the dungeon; in the breasts of men in

private life, with the wreck of property, virtue, honour, and happiness. All ranks, from the emperor on the throne, to the people of the humblest hamlet, have felt its sting. To the fact of its descent to the lowest classes of society we are frequent witnesses, and the court gazettes are evidence that it has marked out victims for disgrace and ruin even among the imperial kindred." Who does not know that when things went wrong amongst the pagans it was ascribed to christianity? that the penal code of Rome, tolerant in matters of religion, at once threw the fasces into the flames to burn the christians, when the axe and the dungeon of old were not thought enough? Who does not see, in the rapid progress of the hellish weed, the hand of god? it could not be the hand of man, from such small beginnings to such great ends. Such things have not been seen since the days of primitive christianity. Opium must be the mustard-seed, which though the smallest of its kind, overshadows all with its branches. We see the still more real accomplishment of the prophecy in the likeness of one plant and its effects to another. Who does not see, in the proceedings of christians to propagate their faith, the forerunners of the traders in opium pushing their contraband traffic? The early christians upset altars, and played Old Harry in the temples, eaten up with the zeal of their lord, and with a desire to manifest his name. Our traders go armed to the teeth, and as the christians swore they would administer their spiritual stuff to the souls of men, willing or unwilling, so our holy army of traders declare the Chinese shall eat opium to the destruction of their minds and bodies, and they will sink and destroy all, who and whatever may oppose them. Nor is it idle boasting—like those of old, they die in the faith, witness two ships' crews tortured and put to death in a Chinese island. Had we not seen such indifference to suffering for the sake of a weed, we might have disbelieved in christian martyrdom and the tales of the crusaders.

The operations of opium, so like to the workings of the holy spirit, affords new proof of christ's kingdom come, to the candid mind of the willing believer. For it we are told they hate father, mother, brother and sister, they lose their property, and commit with indifference every sort of crime. They want nothing else, this alone satisfies all the other numerous wants of our sinful nature. When they have found this treasure, they sell all that they have and buy it. The qualities of this drug, seem to place it above the sacrament, the two kinds in one, as you not only may eat and drink, but smoke opium. This trinity in its composition, with all its other marks of divine origin, show at once the fulfilment of all things. The participation in this sacramental trinity gives such an eleva-

tion of soul, that, going beyond St. Paul's third heaven, the communicant may mount, in spirit, to another story. However the world may have been mistaken in other appearances, here we may at once presume the "comforter" has come. Christianity had triumphed over all the powers of earth, but Satan had found a refuge for the destitute in China, fenced round by its customs, which were far more impregnable than, and were typified as all things must be by, its celebrated wall. We could not appeal to keepers of prophecies, we could not go upon our mission to produce conviction with great signs and wonders, there were no longer martyrs who would face death and force the faith upon the unwilling Chinese. Long had we prayed the lord for his own good time, his peace had not yet come, his sword had not yet entered into China, it was a sealed book for his saints. But the lord had not forgotten his elect, the father was employed on the work of his son and of his children, the seed was sown unknown to the reapers, and the harvest was made ready to their hands—opium was the key to China. China is opened, we were the messengers of the most high; taken from St. Peter's at Rome, the keys of China and of heaven and hell have been given to us, then rush in missionaries, murderers, robbers &c., not to the tune of "rogues all," but "christians all."

W. J. B.

THE GOD CURSE!

THERE is one law for the rich and another for the poor. There is one law for the orthodox and another law for the infidel. The current of the laws, their administration, the gross dishonesty of juries, venality and slavish prejudices of the press, attest the force and fraud by which we govern, and the ignorance through which we are governed. The god-imbed system entangles in a strong and complicated network the whole social fabric, and it is only here and there that occasional assaults, resolutely and vigorously directed, have succeeded in breaking through. The spirit of independence and the struggle for oppressed humanity have accomplished some brilliant achievements—the grand moral contest, whose watchword was "the right of private judgment," made a large inroad into old tyrannies. Men have claimed for it great pre-eminence in forwarding the progressive movement. They have overlooked, or failed to discover, or corruptly concealed its radical and damning defect. It has been left for the true advocate of social and political equality to point out the inequitable basis of an asserted right of private judgment, upheld only for a favoured few, the creedists of the day, and so narrowed as to exclude all who fundamentally dissented from precon-

ceived dogmas. Ordinary dissenters alone have, from their numbers, their wealth, and their consequent influence, wrung from orthodox tyranny such concessions as enables them to assert the right of private judgment practically, in other words, to express freely their conscientious convictions. Less favoured, because more ultra-dissenters, are still beyond the pale of protection. So little have the religious dissenters and non-conformists acted upon this asserted right, that they have had not only to suffer its infringement towards the extreme dissenter, but have had the baseness to goad on the authorities to the execution of their atrocious measures against infidels. No further back than at the period of the Paterson crusade, one of the "liberal" journals, a new candidate for public favour, descended to the mean expedient of travelling out of its way to vilify Paterson, by opprobrious epithets in the mere statement of a police case, to curry favour with its christian readers.*

Such has been the influence of godly cant, that scarcely so much as a single voice or pen was publicly employed in his defence, with the honourable exceptions of Mrs. Martin and Publicola.

The god-spirit, as exhibited in christian professors, is aptly illustrated by the most recent blasphemy cases. It is in these that godly rancour can have its fullest swing, least checked by the struggling and new-born humanity of the age. When did ever humanism show itself in any mode or form of goddism? Persecute—persecute—persecute! Religionise—religionise—religionise! is the language of the god-spirit. Who shall separate religion and persecution? How beautifully they assimilate! Are they not twin sisters, or rather, are they not, as the Siamese twins, so intimately joined as to be almost identical? Who shall wound one without injuring the other—who shall lop one off without destroying the other? The religionist and the persecutor are like Si and Sing, or perhaps the "atrocious trinity," beautifully one, and acting simultaneously, combinedly, and identically. Oh the merciful providence of the Moloch Jehovah—oh the beautiful harmony displayed in the divinely ordained system of bible and gibbet-belief! Who shall presume to sever the connection of the bible and the sword, the crozier and the bludgeon, the wine and the blood, the church and stake, communion and dungeon? Mysterious, hallowed, and venerable union! Let none indulge the vain delusion that infuriate persecutors shall tire while savage religionists incite. "We will never tire nor desist," the sleek and panther-like Chambers was heard to say at one of the Bow-street mock trials and predetermined cases of Paterson. Another

* *The Sentinel.*

version this of "Chambers's Information for the People," without the advantages of the Scotch literary haggis, of being partly new. We know pretty well now, as we knew before this lawyer's warning voice was heard, that the plunder-powers would never tire, as long as they could bribe or terrify dirty tools to do their rough work of oppression.

WHILE THE RULING FEW CAN, THROUGH THE ENORMITIES OF AN ATROCIOUS GOD-BASED SYSTEM, COZEN OR FORCE ONE PORTION OF OUR HAND-WORKERS TO SWEAT, TOIL, AND STARVE, TO FILL THE STATE COFFERS, FOR THE BRIBERY OF ANOTHER PORTION OF THE HAND-WORKERS TO SHOULDER THE MUSKET, TO UPLIFT THE BLUDGEON, TO TURN THE DUNGEON KEY ON THEIR FRIENDS, THEIR HELPERS, THEIR LIBERATORS—WHILE THEY CAN INDUCE THE SHREWD, THE CRAFTY, THE CLEVER, TO SELL THE GLORIOUS POWERS OF SPEECH AND OF THE PRESS FOR PAY, PENSION, OR OFFICE—SO LONG MAY A BANEFUL OLIGARCHY IMPEDE THE PROGRESS OF HEALTHY ACTION, AND CONTINUE TO FEED, PARASITE LIKE, ON THE VITALS OF THE COMMUNITY.

M. Q. R.

ON THE STYLE OF THE "ORACLE OF REASON."

AS the *Oracle* is still to be carried on by parties determined to persevere in their efforts to destroy superstition, root and branch, at much personal risk, and with no other view than the public good, I think a few remarks on the duties of infidels at the present crisis will not be out of place. I consider it to be one of the first duties of infidels to support the infidel press, even though the manner of conducting that press may not be exactly to their minds. Perfection never yet has been the lot of humanity, nor is it likely that it ever will be—hence, if we wait for it, we shall do so in vain. These remarks are made, because many friends to the cause of truth have complained of the "wild onslaughts and dashing reasonings" of this paper, as being too furious to effect much good, and too daring to be safe. I have supported the *Oracle* because it defied authority, and because I thought, and still think, that authority ought to be defied, and when it ceases to defy, I shall cease my support, little though it be—at the same time, I do not feel bound to defend (nor need any one else) all that has appeared in its pages. Perhaps many things might have been better said, but it should be remembered, the *Oracle* was established to encourage both freedom of thought and freedom of style. Uniformity in the latter respect, with a variety of minds, is as impossible as that one style should

please every reader—to neglect, therefore, on that, or any similar grounds, is not in accordance with enlightened reason, and should not be sanctioned by any one who wishes reason to be the guiding principle in the affairs of men. Christians say that the gates of hell will not prevail against their system—but they fear, notwithstanding, the circulation of a penny paper once a week, and to destroy it have had three of its editors in prison at one time, proving that they thought the *Oracle* printing-press much more powerful and dangerous than the gates of hell. According to them, we have already beaten the devil in strength and power, and if we persevere, we shall soon beat the other chap, his "cousin above," likewise; and then we may exclaim with the pious, "for this and all other mercies, the lord's name be praised;" for nothing else will be left save that found in the history of the past. Although I think mental charity a very lovely virtue, I know that cases often occur where it may be thrown away—for many theologians look upon it as a species of pusillanimity, and in such cases I hold that severe denunciation is not out of place—with such it may be effectual when mental charity would fail. Others are so constituted, that reasoning in the common way seems to have no effect upon them—they must be shocked into thought, or they will not think at all, and thus remain in the mine of supernaturalism, and be dead to the best interests of humanity. It is certainly advisable that the truth should be told in a pleasing manner, lest it should be rejected because of the method of propounding it—but who is to decide what is pleasing and what is not? It must in each case be left to individual judgments. I trust, therefore, that we shall hear no more of the cant—"I cannot support the *Oracle*, because of its offensive style."

That the *Oracle* has done more good than any other paper of similar character published during the last few years is, I think, beyond dispute. Hence I consider its existence and prosperity a matter worthy the attention of the sceptical world—let its friends, and the friends of scepticism generally, do all they can to promote its circulation amongst those who most need its influence—I mean those who are still enchained in the bonds of superstition—those who almost imagine that there cannot be two sides to the question, and that the only reasonable one is their own. Let them but freely inquire, and they will soon cease to believe.

I have written thus much on the subject of style, because I find it now almost the only objection brought against the claims of this paper to universal support—no one denies the soundness of its argument, or the utility of the objects its conductors have in

view, save those who are the friends of christianism—all others may say :

Its principles, when understood,
To man will every good insure,
And cause him to prevent those ills,
Which now he tries in vain to cure.

Yours in the cause,
AN EX-SOCIAL MISSIONARY.

BURIAL OF MADELINE HOLYOAKE.

It is impossible to restrain feelings of shame and indignation at the fact, that the remains of *Richard Carlile* should be insulted by the reading of the debasing mummeries of a christian priest over his grave. Carlile ought never to have been taken within the polluted precincts of consecrated ground, nor placed within the power of a priest, who behaved with insolent indignity to him when dead, whom the whole hierarchy could not subdue when living. It might not be so in Carlile's case, but in the majority of cases, the infidel dead are subjected to this treatment from want of moral courage and independence on the part of surviving friends. This happened to the late *Charles Pemberton*. Because it was the custom to have a priest to officiate at the grave, it was represented to Pemberton's friends that it "must be so." In vain was it remarked, that, at a cemetery, every one was permitted to have his own priest, and that courtesy would consent that he who had no priest in life, should be excused one in death. "Ah, but we shall be compelled to have some one," was the timorous answer. The writer earnestly urged that the experiment should be tried, but to no purpose—and he, the giant-minded Pemberton, who, in his "Sixpenny-worth of Truth," emphatically declared that "no mortal man should ever be his priest," was consigned to his last resting place by a priest, and the dull and melancholy nonsense of the prayer-book was doled over his grave. Far more in accordance with principle and sentiment was the interment of the subject of the present notice.

Mr. Holyoake, when in Gloucester gaol, upon being informed of the death of his elder daughter, Madeline, immediately wrote and desired, that "as her little knees had never bent at the polluted shrine of faith, that her remains should not be polluted in death by priestly mummeries. That she should be laid in her grave pure and innocent, as she had lived undebased by religion, and uncontaminated by the presence of religion's ministers." This request, by the firmness of Mrs. Holyoake, was complied with. No sorrow was expressed in person, save those emotions of severed affection which no stoicism could entirely repress, and no art wholly conceal. On the day of the burial, Mrs. Holyoake, accompanied by Miss Caroline

Holyoake, and two of Mr. Holyoake's brothers, conveyed poor Madeline to the Birmingham Cemetery. On entering the place, an official inquired if any beadle attended? The answer was "No." He appeared a little surprised. He then directed the party to proceed to the chapel, where the services was being read over some person. One of the party said, "We do not go into chapel." "Not go into chapel?" rejoined the official of the grave, looking unutterable things. "No, we do not go into chapel," was the reply. "What minister have you?" was his next query. "We have no minister, we dispense with the services of that functionary," was the answer. "What! do you have no minister of any kind?" said the astonished gentleman, looking as though the judgment day was at hand. "No sir," said the speaker of the party, "please to send the sexton this way." The sexton came, who was requested to carefully deposit the coffin in the grave. Which being done, each one threw a bouquet of flowers in, and when all was covered up, the party returned home. The coffin was plain, but pretty—without tawdry tinsel, or silly angels. Madeline rested in the same grave with Mr. Robert Seaborne, who died a few weeks before. Madeline was accustomed to play upon his knees. Poor fellow! his death was brought on through privation, voluntary incurred, coupled with an intense devotion to drawing and painting, in which departments of art he gave uncommon proofs of genius. The privations he incurred arose from his endeavours to support an aged mother and sisters. He died a modest and amiable atheist. Thus Madeline Holyoake lay in death with one whom she loved in life, and whose principles were as pure as her heart was blameless. She was buried without parade, without priest, and without priestly ceremony. It may not improperly be added, that over her grave vows were made like those of Hannibal, of eternal enmity to those principles which in that hour kept her father shut up in a distant gaol.

Had any hesitation been displayed in this instance—had any inquiries been made as to whether what was done could have been permitted, no question but that a priest would certainly have been inflicted. Madeline Holyoake was, perhaps, the first ever so buried in Birmingham—she will not be the last.

THE JIM CROW GOD.

The government has received despatches from Rear-Admiral Dupetit Thouars, announcing that the queen and the chiefs of the Tahiti island had demanded to place their island under the protection of the king of the French. The rear-admiral has accepted the offer, and taken the necessary measures, whilst waiting for the ratification of his majesty, which was sent him.—*Monteur*. The *Siecle* says that the principal cause of the island-

ers yielding themselves to the French has been the rigorism of the Anglican missionaries, who represented every enjoyment, however innocent, as a crime, and that the chiefs and population hail the protection of France and catholicism as a rule of life and discipline less sombre, funereal, and austere. There may be some truth in this.

THE religious world are always boasting of the fine effects of god-worship, and the success of missions in the islands of the Pacific Ocean. Polynesia was to protestant efforts, as China was to the Jesuits. The same liberty to propagate their doctrines was allowed to both, only the protestant had to deal with a less enlightened people, and therefore found the introduction of their christian superstition more easy than the Jesuits did amongst the Chinese. The same results have happened to both parties, their presence and their holy religion have been found so intolerable, that the Jesuits got turned out of China, and the inhabitants of Tahiti have put themselves under the protection of France, in order to escape from the tyranny and misery of English god-worship. It is a pity some atheists were not there, to show them that we are not all fools or mad in this country. We wonder the saints have not sounded the alarm in their camps already. They are dumbfounded, or the cunning dogs want to let their dupes forget such unpleasant facts, before they proceed to tax the god-slaves at the declaration of the annual budget. Let some of us at least go, and put this uncomfortable question at the first missionary meeting. Let us propose to the goddites a solemn fast, now their god has turned his back upon them, and is making love to the scarlet whore. Who would think he could have thus treated his chosen servants, and after they had made Exeter Hall resound with anathemas against the blasphemies and idolatries of the roman catholic worship—that he, and Pomare, queen of Otaheite, should wheel about and turn about in favor of French popery, infidelity, and sabbath breaking? For, place not your trust in princes, read, place not your trust in

W. J. B.

REVIEW.

Mackintosh's Theory of the Universe.—A New and Improved Edition in 20 numbers at 3d. each; 5 parts, 1s. each; or 1 vol., cloth, 5s. 6d. Re-written and re-arranged by the Author.

OF all human speculations, probably none are so profound or so attractive as speculations on the origin of all things, and the causes of their changes. This subject has occupied the attention of philosophers in all ages, but it certainly was never before treated in so plain and popular a manner, as in the present work. What Mr. Hugh Doherty lately attempted for grammar, Mr. Mackintosh seems actually to have accomplished for the mechanism of the universe—explained it on

universal principles. Every thing is proved, or endeavoured to be proved, to turn on the two great pivots of attraction and repulsion, and the novelty is, that the manifestations of the moral world are shown to result from similar causes. It has been finely said by Emerson, "Undoubtedly we have no questions to ask which are unanswerable. We must trust the perfection of creation so far as to believe, that whatever curiosity the order of things has awakened in our minds, the order of things can satisfy." About the perfection of *creation*, or whether there ever was a creation, some doubts may be entertained, but the above passage contains a fine thought, which every man must imbibe who expects to investigate the phenomena of the universe successfully. Mr. Mackintosh seems to have full faith that the "order of things will satisfy whatever curiosity they have awakened," and hence he has undertaken the bold enterprise of explaining the theory of the universe. This work has once been before the public under the title of the "Electrical Theory of the Universe." This name was not given it by the author, but the name now chosen is his own, and is intended to correctly express the object he has in view. The former work excited much curiosity, much speculation, and much discussion. On the present edition much labour is being bestowed. It is stated that every part is being entirely re-written and rearranged, and it is certainly being brought out in a neat manner. To the atheist such a work has much interest, because he is anxious to afford a sober and natural explanation of what passes forward in the physical world. Paley says, that natural theology has ever been pressed with the question of the origin of evil, and with equal truth it may be said, that atheism has ever been pressed with the question, what is the origin of all things, and the causes of their changes. No book before the public has greater pretensions to satisfy these inquiries than the "Theory of the Universe." Mr. Mackintosh makes occasional reference to "divine mind," but this is a minor defect. The work has more enduring excellences than affording incidental support to deistical dogmas. It is the philosophy pervading its pages, the investigations into the causes of physical action, and the reasons of moral manifestations that stamp a value upon the performance. The object of the author is the elucidation of this phenomena upon rational principles—this is the object which we regard, every thing else is to be considered subordinate to this.

G. J. H.

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THE ORACLE OF REASON:

Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE"

EDITED BY "THE MAN PATERSON,"

Sentenced, on January 27, 1843, by Mr. Jardine, of Bow-street, to Three Months' Imprisonment in Tothill Fields Prison, for exhibiting Profane Placards at No. 8, Holywell-street, Strand, London.

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THE GOD CURSE!

WITH GODLY ILLUSTRATIONS,

AND HINTS TOWARDS ITS EXTINCTION.

II.

HUMAN practice conforms to divine doctrine. The prevalence of barbarism and brutality, is coeval with the reign of goddism. As god-worship declines, morality advances. Whether in fetichism, paganism, or modern theism, the god-influence works with more or less activity. Of this society affords forcible illustrations, as may be observed in the grand divisions which Mr. Owen has outlined—or, descending to the minutest details, we shall equally trace its workings. In the production of wealth, its distribution, education, and government, we mark the pestiferous action. The various phases of god-mongery are seen in the aggrandisement, dignities, powers, exaltations, titles, praises, privileges, awarded to one portion of society—and the poverty, abasement, feebleness, prostration, depression, contumely, slavery, belonging to the other portion. The social stagnation and effeminacy of the Hindoos—the appalling customs of the Thugs—the filthiness, lewdness, and monster atrocities of the Jews—the depraved fictions, despotisms, and corruptions of the Greeks and Romans—are mainly referrible to their god-notions. The more prevalent the theocracy, or god-government, the more galling and oppressive the tyranny and abasement.

The lords and lacqueys, masters and servants, rich and poor, employer and employed,

sinecurist and labourer, pensioner and pauper, with other class, trade, and property distinctions of our own period, no less throughout their various modifications, conform with, and are perpetuated by, goddism.

In rivers of blood—in plains defined by ghastly corpses and whitened bones, strewn with swords, scourges, and fetters—by cruelty, and lust, and rapine, and desolation—by groans, and lamentations, and wailings, and shrieks has the progress of the god-monster been tracked. The god-scourges have ever been but exaggerated personifications of the wild extravagances of human infamies. The grossest delinquencies have been personated to make gods, and the god-notions, in turn, have proportionately influenced thought and conduct. A direful action and reaction have thus scourged our species, and it is the subversion of this wide-spread pestilence that it becomes the friends of human progress to devote all their energies to attain.

From the mystic horrors of druidism—the lasciviousness and monstrosities of brahminism—the frantic revelries of the Grecian and Roman saturnalia—the profligacies, pettinesses, and barbarities of the old Jew god—to the raw-head and bloody-bones of the christian mythology, with its incomprehensible jargon and brutal malignity, has the god-curse operated, eating its way, like a cancer, in society—penetrating, corroding, distemping all within the sphere of its influence. How should it be described! What pen or what tongue can adequately write its horrible ravages! How shall the deep-seated rancour, and the relentless persecutions of god-led bigots be recorded! Deeply, extensively,

VOL. II.

constantly, powerfully operative have been the malignant influences of the felon god. "Surely a bloody husband art thou to me," said Zipporah to Moses. Surely a bloody god hast thou been to me, may the follower of the crucified and deified Jew indignantly exclaim, on the dawning of his emancipation from the god-thralldom.

The god-inspired maniacs most fitly utter the sacred wailing. The god-mongering style most aptly suits the god-mongering atrocities. Some choice descriptions of upholders of the bible scheme, from the bibleists themselves, will admirably carry out this idea.

And first of the "hooknosed, blackmugged, yellow-pitted rascals," as Cobbett characteristically termed god's chosen people. The fanatical Jew blood-hounds, according to their own account, mocked, spat on, imprisoned, and stoned the prophetic maniacs whom they afterwards professed to honour and enshrine. The god-selected, god-fondled, god-chastened butchers, having thus commenced and thus continued, consummated their abominations, according to the cross-followers, by persecuting, slandering, scourging, and gibbetting the felon man-god Jesus.

The roman catholic christians, classically denominated by the great christian reformer, Luther, "Asses—the imps of Satan—bred out of the devil's posteriors," &c. as soon as they arrived beyond the infancy of their growth, determined on an orthodoxy and a heresy—the one honoured by all temporal as well as eternal favour, the other pursued with every severity, cruelty, and disgrace they had at that period the power to inflict. "The scarlet whore—the beast—the anti-christ!" as the full-grown papal power was stigmatised by another gang of christian ruffians—these hell-fire bigots, uplifting the banner of the bloody cross, striped, fined, dungeoned, racked, burnt, and, inspired by the atrocious god-spirit, gloated with terrific exultation over the butchered and tortured masses of heretics, and canonized the monster saints who have poeened them on to the carnage.

The "aristocratic ruffians," the "progeny of hell," the "horrid blasphemers," who spout their "diabolical phrensies" and "atrocities," in Exeter Hall, are worthy of condign punishment by the arm of the law, according to the catholic organ, the *True Tablet*—for such christians as these, being, of course, different christians from the catholic sort—for these their dissenting brethren—for what, in christian cant, are called children of the same heavenly father, sheep of one fold and one shepherd—this catholic-christian organ, to use its own words, "sighs ardently for legal vengeance."

In the following strain speaks Mr. Steane, the dissenting protestant, of the protestants of the establishment:

"Instead of being what, perhaps, she once was, and what every church should be, a loving sister, in a sisterhood of churches, she grows into a haughty mistress, clothes herself in lawn, encircles her brow with a mitre, takes her place in the senate chamber with lords and princes, and provokes all honest and truth-speaking men to trace her pedigree to 'the woman which sitteth on the seven mountains, and is drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.' The history of ecclesiastical establishments is a history written in tears, and groans, and blood. The miseries and torments are not to be told, which have been inflicted on christians, by their so-called fellow-christians, when they have grasped the secular power. Ingenuity has been vexed and tortured to devise modes of punishment for the crime of dissenting from the established sect. And let it not be supposed that I speak of other countries, I speak of our own country. And let it not be said that I am telling of roman catholic persecutions, I am telling of protestant persecutions—the persecutions of our own protestant episcopal church."

In this ferocious spirit do these bible-taught, Christ-taught, god-taught fanatics view one another. Fierce as is their wrath, for a brief period they unite and bury their tiger-like animosity, when an utter unbeliever becomes entangled in their meshes, or falls into their fangs. This Southwell and Holyoake experienced practically—Paterson has abundant proof of the god-influence. Right biblically, christianly, and godly did the police, magistrates, lawyer, and jailor-ruffians do their sacred duty, and uphold the character of the bloody cross, by heaping every sort of petty injustice, annoyance, cruelty, and indignity on the brave and indomitable victim of their malignity. They had one to deal with who, however broken in health, is invincible in spirit. Bitterly will they yet, with the aid of a few honest infidels, look back on their holy crusade. Intensely may they be made to know and feel the power of truth, when directed against the atrocious god-curse. This is no vaunt. A strong, deep-rooted, and extensive impression might yet, has yet to be made on the entire country, and thence to all climes by a well-organised atheistic movement. Support the *Oracle*—distribute the *Oracle*. This is the first step—all the rest will follow. What has been accomplished may be repeated. The agitation may be increased tenfold—yes, a hundred-fold. Circulate the *Oracle* into every approachable channel. Priestcraft, churchism, and all the flimsy rubbish with which the half-thinkers trouble themselves, must totter and crumble to the dust with the fall of the cross, the altar, the atrocious trinity, and the liberty-destroying god-curse! M.Q.R.

THE "PART AND PARCEL"
FALLACY.

Christianity is part and parcel of the law of the land.—Lord Chief Justice HALE.

At the recent meeting of the voluntary principle society, one of the speakers remarked, upon the phrase, "the established religion was part and parcel of the law of the land," that it could not be readily understood. Upon which another speaker got up and said, "In the House of Commons last evening, Sir James Graham said, that 'the church of Scotland was not the church of Christ, it was the church as by law established.' " Sir J. Graham was right, the church as by law established was not like the church of Christ, but it was like the law—first, because it was *doubtful* in the interpretation of its own articles, and, second, because it is *expensive* in its administration.

In cases of blasphemy, persons are indicted for speaking against the law of the land. This absurd definition of religion or christianity, being allowed, it may be asked, what crime there is in speaking against the law of the land? Do not persons daily and hourly speak and write against the laws of the land, and are they made amenable to justice? Has not the continual speaking and writing against the laws of the land produced that revision of our code, which has rendered it less bloody in its punishments? Has not the *Times*, ever since the enactment of the New Poor-Law Bill, inveighed against and abused this part and parcel of the law of the land, endeavouring to bring into contempt and hatred the framers, the workers, the objects, and operations of the bill? On what ground, then, is there a difference made between the arguments, the invectives, and the abuse, if they like, used against one part of the law—the speculative parcel—and the same species of reasoning employed against the legislature, the executive, and the practical administration of the laws?

Archbishop Whately says, "What is the precise meaning of the above legal maxim (that christianity is part of the law of the land), I do not profess to determine, having never met with anyone who could explain it to me: but evidently the mere circumstance that we have a 'religion by law established,' does not, of itself, imply illegality of arguing against that religion. The regulations of trade and of navigation, for instance, are unquestionably part of the law of the land; but the question of their expediency is freely discussed, and frequently in no measured language; nor did I ever hear of any one's being menaced with prosecution for censuring them." Coleridge has equally made a subject of ridicule this assumption, that speaking or writing against christianity was a

crime, because christianity was part of the law of the land, and it was an offence to speak against the law of the land. That it is a precedent which does not rule in the rest of the law, has been shown. The meaning, if there be any meaning, to this cant phrase, is that speaking against christianity is speaking against the constitution of the country—that the articles of religion are the same as the establishment of kings, lords, and commons, and that if it be judged you use such language as tends to bring them into disaffection with her majesty's subjects, and leads to their subversion, you are guilty of an offence against the compound nature of the government. Such an opinion would seem to bring the charge under the count which finds O'Connor and the other chartists guilty "for conspiring to bring her majesty's lieges to disaffection and hatred of the laws, and to persuade the said lieges to unite and agree to leave their several employments, and to produce a cessation of labour, in order to bring about changes in the law." Baron Rolfe insinuated a doubt whether there could be a conviction under such an accusation, and the question was reserved as a point for the judges. Now we take it, this equally applies to a case of blasphemy, under the above definition of it, as a crime against the state, and therefore if there be an acquittal of O'Connor and his friends, we demand the renouncement of all jurisdiction in charges of blasphemy. More especially as blasphemy has the double difficulty of not being stated, so as to be comprehensible to Whately or anybody else—considered as a crime against christianity, on the plea of being part and parcel of the law of the land. Lawyers, on the part of the prosecution, would infer that oaths being taken upon the bible, that religion is the connecting link, as plaster joins bricks. But there should be no analogy in law, and Mr. Thomas, in the case of Hetherington, urged that that excuse was removed, when affirmation was deemed sufficient, and religious oaths were dispensed with in the case of quakers. What shall we say of the language of a law, which the cleverest men who are subject to it cannot understand?—though Bacon has said, the law should admonish before it strikes. What shall we say of a law, which gives a complete monopoly to priestcraft, and which no other part of the constitution enjoys to the same extent, and which most of its parts and parcels do not at all possess? What shall we say of a law which the lawyers and judges of the land are afraid to explain, lest the very interpretation should peril its existence? They cry out, we wont entertain a doubt about it, as Judge Erskine said in the trial of Holyoake at Gloucester. I blame Mr. Holyoake, or rather his friends, that they did not accept the challenge of the judge, and refer it to the judges. It is clear

that injustice acts on the double usurpation, that blasphemy is a crime at common law, and that it is a crime to speak against the law of the land. It might have been once a crime to speak against the law of the land, but if so no longer, we have no right to be tried by precedents which are abolished.

W. J. B.

THE AMIABLE DISSENTERS.

The stoutest denial of it will not alter the fact—that the cowardice of British dissenters has revived the hopes of intolerant ecclesiasticism throughout the whole world.—NONCONFORMIST.

THE truth of this honest assertion of the *Nonconformist*, has been abundantly verified within these few days in Worcester, and, indeed, in every part of the kingdom. A meeting was called in Worcester, at the Baptist Chapel, Lowesmoor, at which petitions were brought forward against Sir James Graham's "Factories' Bill." The Rev. Mr. Crow, minister of the place, delivered a long and dull tirade against the church, only enlivened by spleen, sedition, vituperation, and malignity. He said, in the queerest tone imaginable, "If the church carry this bill, *we are done for*." At this moment the auditors looked as drowsy as though the rev. orator had *done for them*, which the gentleman perceiving, he grew quite indignant, and "wondered how people could go to sleep" while he was saying such cutting things—he then sat down in dead silence. Upon this arose that well-known, mild, and courteous follower of the gentle Jesus, Dr. Redford, who before several hundreds of his deluded and degraded followers, blew his nose in Robert Owen's face, when in discussion with him some three years ago. The doctor followed in the track of Mr. Crow, contended "that no dependance was to be placed on any scheme with which the church had to do," and inflicted upon the meeting a speech so heavy that, if attached, it was sufficient to sink the best opposition the dissenters ever set afloat. At the conclusion, I asked if a person would be permitted to suggest a new clause to be inserted in the petition. The Rev. Mr. Crow gave me a most cadaverous look, and said, "I am minister of this place, and if you attempt to speak here, I'll send for a policeman immediately, and give you in charge." Mr. Paterson, a few moments after, begged to know if he might direct the attention of the parties present to documents which, in his opinion, would better show them both sides of the question than the papers which had been read. Dr. Redford replied, "We have sent for policemen, and you'll be given in

charge immediately—we'll not hear a word." Upon this a saint threatened to throw Mr. Paterson over the gallery front. No word was uttered, but Mr. P. and myself sat down in silence, upon seeing a *policeman* voted into the chair. Yet were we both surrounded, and with difficulty escaped with our lives. Humanising religion of Jesus! Here were humble supplicants at the throne of grace, converted, in one short moment, into demons—their ministers prescribing the police-station for the men who differed from them—their followers breaking the necks of their fellow-men for the glory of god and the honour of Christ. Admirable dissenters! condemning Sir James Graham, and abusing the government, because their rights of conscience were interfered with, and at the same moment putting down with policemen and personal violence the conscientious scruples of those who differed from them. The men who ask a liberty for themselves they will not concede to others, deserve not the liberty they enjoy. Such men are unworthy of freedom—they deserve to be crushed, and Sir James Graham in crushing them, will only punish their detestable selfishness.

It is a glorious sight to see the dissenters and churchmen at loggerheads. It is only when rogues fall out, that honest men come by their own. The union of churchmen and dissenters would be the death-knell of mental liberty in Europe. May they quarrel on for ever! It will be happy for humanity if dissensions flourish among them, until they have mutually destroyed each other's horrid faith, and each other's dangerous delusions.

Beautifully was the boasted morality of religion displayed at this meeting. The church will not trust the dissenters with one particle of power, and the dissenters declare that no dependance can be placed on the fairest promises of the church. So potent is the influence of rewards and punishments on these mighty sticklers for the reward and punishment doctrine—so influential are the obligations of religion on these common canters for religion's efficacy, that—oh, tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon—one cannot trust the other, so far as one can see the other. Their own confession could not afford a better clue to the labyrinths of religious hypocrisy, or throw a stronger light on the dark doings of piety, than does this single fact. What faith can christians be expected to keep with others, when they cannot keep faith with themselves? No wonder they have little confidence in the sceptic, when they have none in each other. The dishonest man is always suspicious of his neighbours, and no wonder that the christian judges the atheist to be what he finds himself. Destitute of honour, humanity, principle, justice, love—unless they are born of the fear of hell—how despicable,

in a moral point of view, is a christian. The sentiments of integrity and virtue which grow up in the thoughts of other men, have no place in a christian's breast, unless planted there by the fear of the devil, and cultivated by the dread of damnation. Advocates of human depravity, they seem anxious that their own morality shall testify the truth of their own demoralising doctrines.

Oh that their god the gift would gie them,
To see themselves as others see them.

On Tuesday night, a public meeting was held in the Hall of Science, to petition for a strictly secular education bill. Mr. George Morgan in the chair. Mr. Paterson and myself principally spoke to the resolutions. The ground taken was the broad principle, which passed by the rampancy of ecclesiasticism on the one hand, and the factions and narrow-mindedness of dissent on the other—the principle, that the state ought not to interfere with any man's religion, and consequently it ought not to interfere with any child's religious education. The dissenters have everywhere conceded, that the state might teach dissenting dogmas—they are only concerned that the church should exclusively teach churchism. For this the *Nonconformist* rightly condemns them. Such a concession involves the first and great principle of dissent. If the state was willing to teach atheism, I, for one, would loudly protest against it. For if an atheistical government were permitted to force atheism on the people, a christian government ought to be permitted to force christianity upon the people. But neither the *ism* nor the *anity* should be meddled with by the state. Both should be free as the winds.

Government may patronise science—but opinions never. The government were credited with good intentions, in proposing to educate the factory children—for this the petition prayed—but it also prayed that the education should be unmixd with the religious tenets of any party. This is the only course which is at once fair to churchmen, dissenters, and atheists. The meeting was very crowded, and though a warm opposition was offered by dissenters, the petition was carried by a large majority.

The dissenters here, as in Manchester, opposed every kind of national education. Thus showing that they feel, what they will not own, that morality is fatal to religion. At Manchester, a large meeting rejected an amendment specifically claiming a secular education. Dissenters would wish the poor factory children to perish in the gross ignorance which is now their melancholy lot, unless they can pour into their young minds the poison of their own unhappy sentiments.

G. J. H.

POLITICS FOR POLITICIANS.

THE present struggles for political power are indicative of great results. The increasing sufferings of the mass keep pace with the progresssion of wealth and power. The day is not far distant when a collision must ensue. Powerful bodies meet with powerful shocks—the shock of these two classes will be fearful. Let us endeavour to nullify the result by breaking down the influence of religion—by teaching mankind to reason and not to believe—by standing up like *men*, not crouching like children. Those long inured to slavery become indifferent to its chains and submit without a murmur. The present trials of the chartists demonstrate this. The great body of the people have looked apathetically on while a few brave spirits, from their own ranks, have been dragged before the mock tribunals of the oligarchical despots, for denouncing tyranny—but as the dungeon's door has clanged behind each political victim, another rivet has been loosened from the iron fetters of slavery.

We have looked upon political reform, more as a thing to be desired than expected, while the people were the slaves of creeds and the dupes of priestly knaves—beings whose part of the great jugglery consists in smothering the reasoning faculty. Thinking thus, I have determined to give the utmost publicity to atheistical sentiments, as corrective of the train of evils resulting from the slave-bigot notions of our priest-led population, now emerging from a thralldom that has so long obscured them. It becomes atheists, particularly at *this time*, to inculcate in their various circles the first principles of government and of society, which, as it concerns human happiness, cannot be neglected with impunity. Show the people that did they but reason they never could be kept pining in want, and that it is their ignorance that enables the few to lord it over them.

Did mankind but reason on the true object of association—of themselves—of their position—and their relation to things, they never could remain the slaves of a corrupt faction of kings, lords, and priests—a trinity of despots upon earth, only equalled by the pernicious trinity in heaven—a faction who sacrifice the general welfare to their own aggrandisement—who riot in church, state, social, and commercial spoliation, which maintains a few in debilitating luxury, and condemns the many to endless toil and cheerless penury. Think you a people capable of understanding their own interests would be the tame and servile slaves of a band of despots, who, without scruple, strew the earth with blood, carnage, and misery?

Men have been so oppressed by the double yoke of spiritual and governmental bondage,

that they do not know their own powers. Political injustice has been so sanctioned by religion, that men have become duped thereby into mere tools in the hands of tyrants and priests. The attention of men has been turned from the natural causes of their degradation—they have never seen clearly the source of their miseries—and they have attributed to the will of a god what was only the effect of despotic laws. Do we not now see that it is an unjust government which is reducing the industrious to poverty and degradation—trampling under foot and shackling the human thought, and inventing barriers to the progress of true knowledge? The ruling power is a monster-tyranny: the monarch is an imbecile bauble—the lords a band of hereditary brigands and humbugs—and the priests a pack of knavish, cold-blooded hypocrites. The commons are the contemptible tools of the aristocracy—and the houses of parliament are dens of hideous profligacy—whilst the people are ignorant slaves, who cringe, fawn, and lick the hands that scourge them, in order to conciliate their tyrants' favour. The intelligent portion of the public know full well that the government we have is undeserving of support. Let us hasten the day of destruction to a system that is useless for all the purposes of its institution. Let us hasten to bring into general and deserved contempt, the whole pile of religious and political rubbish, together with the putrid corruptions engendered by its atrocious absurdities. Working-men, *property*, by the universal consent of mankind and the principle of morality, is sacred—your labour is your property—an unjust government deprives you of the fruits of your labour—they rob you, and afterwards apply the ill-gotten wealth to demoralise and crush you. What alternation is there left? None, but that of taking your own as soon as possible—the emergency is terrible—but you must either do so, or your fellows will continue to perish for want—and the principles of morality, which are *the greatest good to the greatest number*, demand that the useless few should succumb to the useful many. Our humanity ought to make us shudder, not at the employment of force to annihilate a few tyrants, but that we should quietly hear and read daily of numbers of our countrymen sinking into the grave, the victims of our damnable religious and political impostures—and yet the blood runs cold through our veins! Psha! our blood, like our morality, is so tainted with impurities, that we are only the remnants of things that were. If we remove, and cannot take all our property, do we not leave the rubbish? If on board a foundering vessel, do we not destroy the most useless lives and property first? Then, why not carry the principle out in every case? Why do

we see mothers and their infants sink into early graves for want, or by the oppressors' hand, and yet leave the oppressors quiet? Simply because we are disunited and ignorant—else would working-men see they owe no allegiance to an authority that does not protect, but rather destroys them. Force, I maintain, is justifiable where its employment will not produce a greater evil than the evil removed by it. This, I contend, is impossible in the present state of things—the statistics of the country show that suffering is almost incalculable, and I for one shall consider it my duty to upset by reason, argument, or otherwise, a system so destructive to life and morality, which is upheld only for the benefit of a few.

T. P.

REVIEW.

A Funeral Sermon, occasioned by the death of Richard Carlile, preached at the Hall of Science, City Road, London, by Emma Martin. London: Watson, Paul's Alley, Paternoster Row.

THE authoress of this discourse is one of those admirable women who prove that the appellation of "better half" of mankind, is no fictional compliment, but a sober and cheering verity. No woman ever before said the bold and excellent things which continually fall from the lips of this lady. Not less quick in perceiving just principles than energetic in advocating just action—she stands forward in denouncing conventional wrong, when men are found cold, calculating, and prudent. When public meetings have been held to solicit protection for parties imprisoned for opinions' sake—no matter what their opinions were—no matter whether they were atheists or not—no matter that men had certain squeamish fears about taking an unqualified part in their defence—no matter who approved or who disapproved—without caring for certain respectable cant, relative to feelings, propriety, and decency outraged—she stood the eloquent and uncompromising defender of every man and woman's right to speak their own sentiments in their own words. In this generous spirit she has, in her discourses, paid a noble compliment to Carlile. The remarks on the injurious direction given by rulers to public opinion is excellent—the estimation of the value of Mr. Carlile's recent policy is accurate—and the promise that religion shall yet pay dearly for the shortened days of our champion of the press's liberty, is bravely given, and it is the duty of every infidel to see that it is *religiously* fulfilled.

G. J. H.

MORALS.

(From Sir James Mackintosh's Lectures.)

I HAVE said in my printed discourse, that morality admits no discoveries; and I shall now give you some reasons for a position, which may perhaps have startled some, in an age when ancient opinions seem in danger of being so exploded, that when they are produced again, they may appear novelties, and be even suspected of paradox. I do not speak of the theory of morals, but of the rule of life. First, examine the fact, and see whether, from the earliest times, any improvement, or even any change, has been made in the practical rules of human conduct. Look at the code of Moses. I speak of it now as a mere human composition, without considering its sacred origin. Considering it merely in that light, it is the most ancient and the most curious memorial of the early history of mankind. More than three thousand years have elapsed since the composition of the Pentateuch; and let any man, if he is able, tell me in what important respects the rule of life has varied since that distant period. Let the Institutes of Menu be explored with the same view; we shall arrive at the same conclusions. Let the books of false religion be opened; it will be found that their moral system is, in all its grand features, the same. The impostors who composed them were compelled to pay this homage to the uniform moral sentiments of the world. Examine the codes of nations, those authentic depositories of the moral judgment of men; you everywhere find the same rules prescribed, the same duties imposed: even the boldest of these ingenious sceptics who have attached every other opinion, has spared the sacred and immutable simplicity of the rules of life. In our common duties, Boyle and Hume agree with Bossuet and Barrow. Such as the rule was at the first dawn of history, such it continues till the present day. Ages roll over mankind; mighty nations pass away like a shadow; virtue alone remains the same, immortal and unchangeable.

The fact is evident, that no improvements have been made in practical morality. The reasons of this fact it is not difficult to discover. It will be very plain, on the least consideration, that mankind must so completely have formed their rule of life, in the most early times, that no subsequent improvements could change it. The chances of a science being improvable, seem chiefly to depend on two considerations.

When the facts which are the groundwork of a science are obvious, and when the motive which urges men to the investigation of them is very powerful, we may always expect that such a science will be so quickly perfected, in the most early times, as to leave little for

after ages to add. When, on the contrary, the facts are remote and of difficult access, and when the motive which stimulates men to consider them is not urgent, we may expect that such a science will be neglected by the first generations of mankind; and that there will be, therefore, a boundless field for its improvement left open to succeeding times. This is the grand distinction between morality and all other sciences. This is the principle which explains its peculiar history and singular fortune. It is for this reason that it has remained for thirty centuries unchanged, and that we have no ground to expect that it will be materially improved, if this globe should continue inhabited by men for thirty centuries more. The facts which lead to the formation of moral rules are as accessible, and must be as obvious, to the simplest barbarian, as to the most enlightened philosopher. It requires no telescope to discover that undistinguishing and perpetual slaughter will *terminate* in the destruction of his race. The motive that leads him to consider them, is the most powerful that can be imagined. It is the care of preserving his own existence. The case of the physical and speculative sciences is directly opposite. There the facts are remote, and scarcely accessible; and the motive that induces us to explore them, is comparatively weak. It is only curiosity; or, at most, only a desire to multiply the conveniences and ornaments of life. It is not, therefore, till very late in the progress of refinement, that these sciences become an object of cultivation. From the countless variety of the facts, with which they are conversant, it is impossible to prescribe any bounds to their future improvement. It is otherwise with morals. They have hitherto been stationary; and, in my opinion, they are likely for ever to continue so.

NOTICE.

T. M., London, who wrote to us in November last, and to whom an apology is due, seems to have misunderstood the tenor of W. C.'s article in No. 41, "Why are we Atheists?" as he will perceive by referring to that paper.

H. G., Kingston-upon-Hull, has my thanks for his kind wishes. I hope himself and friends will do what they can without injuring themselves. The day will yet come when they may openly advocate the obnoxious principles. The poetry sent was not suited to our columns. H. G.'s letter, with that of our friend noticed above, was removed by mistake from Holywell-street, and only discovered by accident this week, or a notice should have appeared earlier.

ERRATA.—On page 128, in the notice of H. Higgs, for "boasted" read *wasted*.

In No. 69, article "Prophecies," for "hear," read *have*, in the 12th line from the top of first column.

A friend of mine last year visited Newgate, and witnessed a most interesting scene. He found a party, consisting of Mrs. Fry; with a lady of the unitarian sect, a dissenting clergyman of another sect, a christian not attached to any particular denomination, and Mr. Owen. Here were five individuals all differing from each other on the subject of religion, but united in the work of benevolence. After the minister had addressed, in a conscientious manner, about seventy convicts under sentence of transportation, in the general solemn religious exhortation, but without producing any apparent effect, Mr. Owen was requested to say a few words to them; when such was the feeling and commiseration with which he deplored their unhappy lot, and reminded them how much they might alleviate their sufferings, by the exercise of kindness to each other, that all were in tears, and seemed to regard him with emotions of gratitude and veneration: the matron or superintendent said that she had never before beheld in the prison a scene so affecting.—*Hampton of the Nineteenth Century.*

GOD-TYRANNY.—Sir Edward Belcher, in a recent work, speaking of the condition of some of the Sandwich Islands, says—"No apparent change has taken place in the cultivation of the land; they are still in the same state of idleness as to their own affairs. They cannot cultivate their land, because their labour is demanded for the church, the missionaries having obtained the necessary edict which compels the natives to labour on the reefs, to procure blocks of stone for the purpose of building a new church. The first duty of obtaining subsistence for their families, was deemed but a secondary consideration. If they presumed to do so on Sunday, their punishment was double labour the ensuing week. Even the servants of the foreign residents were interfered with, and arbitrarily marched off. This state of things could not exist long; great discontent was manifested by all parties, and it probably would have proceeded to some decisive act, had it not been considered advisable to suspend operations for one year. At Tahiti the natives are compelled to frequent the church. Here the attendance may be avoided, but 'you shall build one of stone.' What, it will be asked, is this amount of labour? To cut a block of compact coral limestone from the reef, about three feet long, two wide, and one deep, at low water, and transport it to the shore—say half a mile."—*Voyage Round the World, 1836-42.*

DAVID'S FORESIGHT.—"Saw (in the British Museum) the first bible printed on vellum, and turning to the 91st psalm, 5th verse, instead of 'Thou shalt not be afraid of the terrors by night,' &c., I saw the fol-
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lowing—"Thou shalt not fear the bugs and vermin by night," &c."—*Curwen's Journal.*—[An amazing proof this of divine inspiration. Caviel as infidels may, fresh evidence is daily turning up to establish the truth of the blessed Jew-book. No question but that the verse above was written by David as Curwen found it—it being one of the early and ungarbled translations. In modern days a fashionable colouring has been given to sacred truth, which mars its beautiful prescience and simplicity. David, no doubt, foresaw the narrow alleys and crowded courts of London, where the little red fellows nocturnally reign—hence the comforting assurance—"thou shalt not fear the bugs or vermin by night." How delicate! how chaste! Who would not be a christian, in order to receive such a gentle compliment to his cleanliness?—*Ed. of O.*]

DIDEROT ON BACON AND PLATO.—The following is an extract from a letter of Romilly's, relating the substance of a conversation between him and Diderot on materialism—"He said that Chancellor Bacon was one of the greatest men our country had ever produced, and that Bacon says, 'The first cause is a virgin, sacred to god, which produces nothing;' that Plato, too, the author of all the good theology that ever existed on the earth, says, that there is a vast curtain drawn over the heavens, and that men must content themselves with what passes beneath that curtain, without ever attempting to raise it.

It is remarkable, that in the genealogies of Christ, only four women have been named: Tamar, who seduced the father of her late husband; Rahab, a common prostitute; Ruth, who instead of marrying one of her cousins, went to bed to another of them; and Bathsheba, an adúlteress, who espoused David, the murderer of her first husband.—*A. Walker, on "Woman."*

THE LIBRARY OF REASON.

ON Saturday, May 6, the proprietors of the *Oracle of Reason* will publish No. I. of their "Library of Reason," to be continued on the first Saturday of every month. The "Library of Reason," will consist of reprints of rare and valuable works, which are either out of print or too expensive for the general reader. No. I. will contain the whole of the celebrated

ESSAY UPON "SUPERSTITION,"

By Plutarchus.

Translated by the late lamented Julian Hibbert, and printed by him at his own private press. Originally sold at one guinea. The "Library of Reason" will be of uniform size and appearance with the *Oracle of Reason*, and be published at the same price, namely, ONE PENNY per number, containing nearly double the usual quantity of information given for that sum by the Liberal or Infidel Press.

Printed and Published by THOMAS PATERSON, No. 11, Bolt-court, Fleet-street, London, to whom all Communications should be addressed.
Saturday, April 22, 1843.

THE ORACLE OF REASON:

Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE"

EDITED BY "THE MAN PATERSON,"

Sentenced, on January 27, 1843, by Mr. Jardine, of Bow-street, to Three Months' Imprisonment in Tothill Fields Prison, for exhibiting Profane Placards at No. 8, Holywell-street, Strand, London.

Originally Edited by CHARLES SOUTHWELL, sentenced, on January 15, 1842, by Sir Charles Wetherall, to Twelve Months' Imprisonment in Bristol Gaol, and to pay a fine of £100, for Blasphemy, contained in No. 4. [PRICE 1D.]

Second Editor, G. J. HOLYOAKE, sentenced, on August 15, 1842, by Mr. Justice Erskine, to Six Months' Imprisonment in Gloucester Gaol, for Blasphemy at Cheltenham.

No. 72.]

THE PLACARD AGITATION.

I.

The free circulation of these Patersonian, or Holywellstreetarian creeds, have proved thoroughly harmless.—PUBLICOLA.

ONE of the most striking traits of moral greatness is certainly to be found in the bold and independent enunciation of opinion, in the midst of universal dissent. Few men are found capable of doing it, but, without attempt at fulsome eulogy, *Publicola*, in the above sentence, has exhibited this admirable feature. He has been the only infidel of eminence who has had the courage to declare that the placard agitation at the *Oracle of Reason* office was harmless.

During my recent visit to London, I heard with much interest a brief history of what is known, by our friends there, as the "placard agitation." Shut up in Gloucester gaol, little reached me of the world's busy transactions, and of my friends' strugglings. But what I was told, and what I myself, in London, saw of the placard agitation, struck me as teeming with truths stranger than fiction—with remarkable characteristics deserving of record, worthy of comment, and redolent with useful teaching. Busy with a thousand cares, lecturing incessantly, hurrying from town to town, I have hitherto been without an opportunity of registering my opinions upon this subject. But, as at it I have wondered, and as by it I have been instructed, and thinking, of course, it might profit others, I proceed to give a few facts and thoughts upon the event.

A few months ago, Mr. Paterson and a few other friends, about whose heterodoxy, I presume, there is little question, determined that the office in Holywell-street should do something besides sell *Oracles*, and so began to hang up papers in the window, which strongly and plainly expressed their sentiments about the god-idea, the Jew-

book, and such like clerical ware. These papers were written so intelligibly, that Isaiah himself would have said, that he who ran could read them. This proceeding is what was known as "the placard agitation." And an agitation it really was. According to the *Age*, 20,000 persons per day, passed through the street to see them. This first essay has ended in Mr. Jardine, a *unitarian* magistrate, declaring that the shop window in which the placards were exhibited was a thoroughfare, in order to enable him, by the police-act, to sentence Mr. Paterson to imprisonment in the House of Correction. And this Mr. Jardine found no difficulty in doing, upon the most refined unitarian-christian principles. In the recent numbers of the *Oracle*, and in the report of Mr. Paterson's trial, these profane placards may be found by persons curious to see them.

Now, christians are always forward to say, and zealous to boast, that whatever objections an infidel may have to their doctrines and books, he is too *prudent* to express them. Leslie taunts infidels for this pusillanimity. And the sneers of Leslie have been, and are, echoed from every pulpit, repeated by every christian lip, and perpetuated by every saintly pen. The cry has been, that infidels are ashamed to openly proclaim all they really think. The fact is, that infidels have been seduced into the vain and useless policy, that it was best to respect christian feeling. But so far from christians appreciating this deference to their feelings—so far from generously allowing that in infidel judgment christian mysteries were more disgusting and obscene than infidels openly proclaimed—so far from doing one or the other of these things, christians have taken most malicious advantage of this forbearance, and have insinuated, that so diabolical are infidel tenets, that infidels are *ashamed* to utter them before men. Yes, christians have loudly proclaimed infidels as hypocrites, as dissemlers, as men who were ashamed of their own sentiments, because they put not those

sentiments publicly and openly forward. This foul stigma, which no honest, honourable, or earnest man could endure, Mr. Paterson and other friends resolved to wipe away once and for ever. To do this, they openly, boldly, and plainly expressed their honest abhorrence of the degrading doctrines of christianity. Of the bible they spoke as they felt. Like Crabbe, they adhered strictly to their subject, and painted in coarse and rugged language, the coarse and rugged points of the Jew-book. What was low, they drew low—what was obscene, they expressed as obscene. Despising the cant of respectability, and the misgivings of timidity, they were true to their own conceptions, and true to their original. The result of all this was, that christians began to exclaim of their feelings being shocked, and of decency being violated. The vice-chancellor's son broke the windows, and christians were loud in all their papers in invoking the most brutal vengeance. Mr. Paterson was put in Tothill-fields prison, openly insulted, and barbarously treated. The governor evidently having been directed to spare neither abuse nor punishment, while Mr. Paterson was in his power. Verily, who can please the pious? What can an infidel do to get into saintly graces? When infidels, through consideration of christian sensibility, refrain from expressing all they think, christians condemn it as hypocrisy—and when they openly proclaim their opinions, christians punish it as an outrage. It is criminal dissimulation to say nothing, and a violation of decency to speak. As was said by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, in their report of Mechanics' Institutions for 1841, "it is in vain to attempt to conciliate the favour of religious adversaries." This conduct described, is, on the part of christians, strange enough, but what is to be said of infidels who joined them? For the clamour and dissent against the Holywell-street proceedings by infidels of all grades, was, if not as vindictive as that of the christians, at least as steadily condemnatory. Friends who had been warm in defence of Mr. Southwell and others, grew cold in this case. The generous enthusiasm many had before displayed, now shrunk up into the narrow dimensions of respectable propriety. London was in one commotion, every paper groaned with heavy, and blazed with hellish articles each morning, calling for the violent and brutal suppression of an infidel's liberty to speak his own sober and strong convictions upon christian mysteries. Then it was found how few there were who could see a principle through the clouds of clamour, and how few could find a tongue to defend right when the multitude dissented. Then it was, when infidels were dumb, or more than dumb, were

condemning—when christians were dying with an atheistical cholera—that *Publicola* declared that all the Holywellstreetarian creeds were harmless. It will scarcely be believed by calm men, that these things could have been. But so it was, those who did not deny what they had always professed, the right of free expression, could not, or would not see any utility in openly denouncing christianity. And they called it "low" and "scurrilous," without appearing to have the slightest notion that language that was "low" might be perfectly proper, and that nothing could be "scurrilous" which was true. Even socialists were found to join in the disapproval. It might proceed from sincerity, but no man will deny but that it also proceeded from simplicity. Persons who had stood by, and suffered for the *Oracle*, thought that its identification with the Holywell-street agitation had ruined it. Now, why should such an opinion be entertained? Beyond mere respectable clamour and christian cant, what can be said in condemnation of the placard agitation? Will any man upon the platform, or in this, or any other paper, show that there was one word said of the Jew-gods, or Jew-books, which was not richly deserved? Will any one who called the placard language "low" and "scurrilous," show how the low and obscene ideas and imagery of the bible can be expressed, but by the employment of low and obscene language? The necessity was a hard one, and in treating disgusting subjects, there is no alternative but the presentation of disgusting pictures, and as that honest and bold critic Ebenezer Elliott has said of Crabbe's poems, "The severity of Crabbe's style is an accident belonging not to him, but to his subject." So, I contend, was the coarseness of the placards an accident belonging not to the writers, but to their coarse subject—most sacred christians' books and gods. I do not deny that the language was low, and sometimes obscene, but I contend most decidedly, that no other language could have been honestly used. I deny that a scurrilous word was employed, or one not warranted by truth and fidelity. And the great value of that public exposition of christian doctrines was shown in the fact, that both christians and infidels revolted from a stern and naked portrait of orthodox originals. Let any man come forward and show that any placard did an injustice to its subject. Let any man who can take up that "glorious book," the bible, and point out wherein it has been misrepresented, and I will at once join in the general condemnation of the placard that did it. But till this is done, I shall regard as most disgraceful weakness that all-censuring of that conduct which honesty and duty dictated. He who speaks untruly of

christianity deserves unqualified reprehension—but he who faithfully, and in full sincerity, pictures forth its disgusting indecencies, merits esteem for the bravery of the act, and commands approval for the stern truth of his language. As Engleclue has well said of materialism, “I have yet to learn that there is grossness in truth.” Of anything said I have but one question to ask—IS IT TRUE? and if so, whatever it may be, I will approve it—whatever it may be, I will defend it. Though all the world censure and condemn, though bigots rage, and friends grow cool, while I have power I will stand by it, or while I have a tongue or a pen, both shall be employed in its service.

What is infidelity without truth? What is atheism without integrity? Ought not infidels then to have been foremost in defending the placard agitation? It might give some alarm to christianity—it might have given a nervous twitch to the squeamish—but if such little things are to frighten us, errors will grow up like a colossus, and we little men must peep about its huge and bloated legs, to find ourselves dishonourable graves.

To the honour of human nature, Mr. Paterson and Mr. Ryall were not left quite alone to battle with prejudice and power. W. J. B., of the *Oracle*, with the generosity of a Hibbert, has published Mr. Paterson's bold and extraordinary defence.

And it is but common justice to say, that Mr. Thomas, Mr. Paterson's barrister, did for blasphemy, as far as the case went, what the great Lord Erskine did for politics. No barrister before ever defended with such English intrepidity a case of that kind. It raises our estimation of the morality and independance of the bar, when its members are found claiming legal justice for the infidel as well as the christian. Never has opposition to christianity been more boldly conceived, more honestly executed, or more daringly defended than, from first to last, has been the Holywell-street placard agitation.

G. J. H.

ATHEOPHOBIA.

GODMONGER.—Dear me! Sir—but you never can be an atheist, surely!

“La! Ma, what an 'orrid thing! Isn't it awful looking?” “What, Lavy, my dear?” “Why it's a great, big, fierce-looking thing, with great jaws and teeth, and saucer eyes, claws to its fingers, and claws to its toes, and a hook to its tail, and—and—why it has two more heads, and lots of arms and legs—well I never!” “Why it's the devil, my love.” “Oh no, the devil has only one head and tail, two legs, and two arms.”

“Then it must be an Egyptian mummy, or a Chinese josstick, or a Burmese idle, or a—a—Ingine antiquity—or, perhaps—yes, you may depend on it—it is—it certainly is—an atheist!”

And are the horrors, real or figured, of some of our fribbles or hypocrites of the press, on the discovery of an atheist in person, print, or paper, in effect less than those of Miss Wilhelmina Lavinia Skeggs Ramsbottom, on view of a “heathen idol,” at the British Museum?

The genteel atheists, the very genteel and proper atheists, or half atheists, who, under colour of a leetle latitudinarianism, throw out hints for atheism in two guinea quartos or five guinea folios—who lecture in latin, also, having, priest-like, a sacred language, to keep the esoteric doctrine from the profane ones—these classical sceptics who knew the proprieties, kept to a shade within the genteel boundary of blasphemy, and could be courtier and infidel at once, or by turns—the heterodox of this caste stir not up the bile of our soi-disant liberals. No, their anathemas must be reserved for the plain open speaker, and for those who actively promulgate “without mystery, mixture of error, or fear of man,” right down, point blank, unevasive, unmistakable atheism.

Above all, should the atheist presume to adopt a similar style or manner in exposing the god-delusion, which his opponents use in stigmatising his opinions and motives, forth start the open-mouthed pack of baying hounds—the snapping curs snarl and bark at every corner—the “blatant beasts” of the cross clamour onwards to hunt him down—and the sneaking dastards of “dissent,” “nonconformity,” or other heterodox pretence, who bellow for liberty and right of private judgment, instead of universal principle, as long as empty noise can save, join in the rabble execration, or, at the least, turn tail, while others consummate the christian barbarities. As said by *Paterson* versus *god*, in the trial, *GOD* versus *PATERSON*—“There is scarcely a body of men, be their opinions what they may, who have not been, and are not, day by day, vilified by their opponents. Such a course is the rule, urbanity and courtesy the exception.” If they do not like our “style,” and instead of correcting it by suavity, hurl the first missile of invective, let them, if they list, give denunciation for denunciation, railing for railing. And let them not object, should our *taste* happen to lead us to the same style. Or if they do, it will be all the same. If abuse, and blackguardism even, be congenial to the mind of a writer on theology, seeing how very fashionable such “styles” are among the political factions, in god's, or the devil's, name, why should he be restricted? As the *man* Paterson said to the *justice*

Jardine, "Why should the monopoly of blackguardism, rancour, and scurrility, be enjoyed by one portion of the press only, or those engaged in one section of subjects? Why should the political scavengers employed in the sewers of the *Herald*, *Times*, *Post*, and *Standard*, with some of the opposition nightmen, alone have the privilege of throwing mud at one another? And why should not the god-disputants—the sceptics I mean—why, I say, should not the infidels have a fling as well? for the god-defenders abuse with impunity. Whence comes this striking contrast, this Irish reciprocity?"

The crusade of the tyrannocrats, their lick-spittles, or their pretended foes, in favour of the *courtesies* and *proprieties* is all moonshine, more fictitious than christian charity, and as unreal as christian figments. What they object to in substance is—not *shocking* the people—but *informing* the people. Though, if shocking them should be with some the most effectual way of awakening them to a "sense of their situation," of course the shocking system would be the most loudly and vehemently objected to, and rancorously punished. Again, as Paterson has said in the sixtieth page of his shilling's worth of first-rate heterodoxy, "Blasphemy and profanities, if good for any, are good for all, and all shall have them too, since the diffusion-of-useful-knowledge-society has taught us the way to spread out useful knowledge for the masses. Blasphemy for the many, then! 'atheism for the millions!'—which have so horrified the exclusives and the godly when seen in my window, shall still be plentifully diffused. The people shall know, and knowing, be taught to avoid the pestilential contagion that is sought to be spread abroad by the sacred nuisance of the filthy Jew-book." M. Q. R.

THEORY OF REGULAR GRADATION.

XXXIII.

(Mammalia continued.)

IN the mammalia the increased development of the nervous system is marked by the size and length of the spinal chord; the magnitude of the cerebrum and cerebellum, and the number of their grey deposits and commissures, as well as by the number and arrangement of the ganglions, together with the extent and systematic distribution of the great sympathetic. The *spinal chord* is larger in proportion to the size of the body, but smaller when compared with the brain, in this than in any of the preceding classes.

The vast superiority of man over all other animals in mental faculties, led physiologists at a very early period to seek for correspond-

ing differences in the brains of man and animals. They compared the weight of the brain with that of the body, and their researches led them to conclude that man had the largest brain in proportion to his body. Since the time of Aristotle till within a late period this opinion has been received; but more modern investigations have proved that the proportion of the brain to the body in some birds exceeds that of man, and that several of the quadrumana and some rodentia equal him in this respect. The illustrious Soemmering proposed another mode of comparison, that of the ratio which the mass of the brain bears to that of the nerves arising from it, and in this point of view man is decidedly pre-eminent.

The brain of man far exceeds in size that of the simiæ compared with the nerves proceeding from it, and in these latter and in the seal it is larger in proportion than in other animals, while it is smallest in the glires, marsupialia, cheiroptera, and edentata. The largest brain which Soemmering has found in a horse weighed 1lb. 4oz.; and in an adult man, was 2lb. 5½oz., yet the nerves arising from the former were ten times larger than those of the latter. Certain it is small animals have a larger brain in proportion to their size, than large ones, and in cold-blooded animals its dimensions are very small, compared with those of a higher temperature. The following table shows the relative weight of the brain to that of the body in several of the vertebrate classes of animals:—

Fishes.—Silurus glanis, one-1887th; dogfish, one-1344th; shark, one-2496th; carp, one-560th.

Reptiles.—Turtle, one-5688th; coluber natrix, one-792d; frog (amphibious), one-172d.

Birds.—Goose, one-360th; duck, one-257th; eagle, one-260th; falcon, one-102d; sparrow, one-25th; canary-bird, one-14th.

Cetacea.—Porpoise, one-93d; dolphin, one-102d, one-60th, one-36th, one-25th.

Solipeda.—Ass, one-254th; horse, one-700th; one-400th.

Ruminantia.—Ox, one-860th; stag, one-290th; sheep, one-192d; calf, one-219th.

Pachydermata.—Wild boar, one-672d; domestic, one-512th; elephant, one-500th.

Rodentia.—Beaver, one-290th; hare, one-228th; rabbit, one-152d; rat, one-76th; mouse, one-43d; field mouse, one-31st.

Carnivora.—Dog, one-305th, one-47th; fox, one-205th; wolf, one-230th; cat one-156th, one-82d; ferret, one-138th.

Plantigrada.—Hedge-hog, one-168th; bear, one-165th; mole, one-36th.

Cheiroptera.—Bat, one-96th.

Lemurs.—Vari, one-84th; mococo, one-61st.

Baboons.—Magot, one-105th; great baboon, one-104th; macaque, one-86th.

Apes.—Mangabey, one-48th; the monk ape, one-44th; malbrouk, one-24th.

Sapajous.—(American apes) Coaita, one-41st; Sai, one-25th; Saïmiri, one-22d.

Ourang-Outangs.—The gibbon, one-48th; chimpanse, 26 inches in height, 11 ox. 7dr.

Child of six years, one-22d; adult man, one-35th.

The olfactory nerves are largest in the ruminantia, pachydermata, and carnivora, smaller in the cheiroptera and quadrupana, and discoverable with difficulty in many of the cetacea. In the squirrel, rabbit, hare, and other large-eyed nocturnal quadrupeds, the optic nerves are very large; they are small in rats, mice, bats, hedge-hogs, and subterranean moles, and in the sorex araneus, mus typhlus, mus capensis, and others they are said to be altogether wanting. They unite before the infundibulum, and form a partial crossing of their fibres. The third, fourth, and sixth nerves are distributed as in man, and are very small in subterranean animals. Of all the cerebral nerves, none reaches so great a degree of development as the fifth pair, in the inferior classes of animals and in the foetal state of the human subject; it is also of enormous size in most aquatic birds. Its branches are freely and extensively distributed in those animals with proboscis, long muzzles, large lips, and broad bills, as the cetacea, ruminantia, pachydermata, carnivora, and ornithorhynchi, and also in those possessing horn, spines, bristles, and whiskers. This nerve is supposed to preside over the peculiar *instinctive* actions so remarkable in those grades of animals which indicate an inferior degree of mental endowment, and this opinion receives strength from the fact of its great size in the very early periods of human existence, when we know the actions are purely instinctive. The remaining cerebral, the spinal, and the sympathetic nerves are distributed so much after the human type as to merit no particular remarks.

In most mammalia the arteries of the brain form a complicated net-work around the petuitary body at the base of the cranium, named *rete mirabile*, which impedes the flow of blood to the brain in those animals with pendent heads. The veins occasionally run in osseous canals in order to avoid pressure; this is well seen in the cribriform plate of the mole's skull, and in the bony falx (sickle) cerebri of the porpoise. In man the falx is formed by the doubling of the dura mater, and prevents the two sides of the brain from pressing on each other. A bony falx cerebri is also found in the ornithorhynchus, an animal which abounds in instances of anomalous structure. Animals which possess a bony tentorium (tent or pavilion) are of far more common occurrence: it is well developed

in most species of the cat and bear kind; it is not so well marked in the dog, seal, horse, and wombat, and it is merely rudimentary in the pig, the rabbit, and the mouse.

It has been generally supposed that these structures exist in such animals only as jump far, and that they served the purpose of protecting the respective portions of the cerebrum and cerebellum from undue pressure during these active movements, but this opinion is rendered quite untenable from the fact of their absence in many animals notable for jumping, as the wild goat, &c., and their presence in those animals alike remarkable for their slow and easy movements, as the bear.

The following is an analysis of the principle points in the nervous systems of the animal kingdom:—A nervous system exists in every class of animals, though not in all the animals of each class. In the invertebrate classes it has a peculiar tendency to accumulate around the oesophagus. In all the vertebrata its principal parts are protected by osseous sheaths. The spinal marrow is tubular in the human embryo, and most of the lower vertebrata. This system undergoes remarkable changes in the amphibia, during their metamorphosis. It is highly developed, and with great uniformity in birds. The chord presents enlargements corresponding in size to the members most used. The spinal chord bears a large ratio to the size of the body in most mammalia. Man's superiority is due to his mental faculties. The brain is larger in proportion to the size of the nerves connected with it in man than in any other animal. The fifth cerebral, or the nerve of *instinct*, is very large in most mammalia, and in the foetal state of the human subject.—(Evers.)

OXFORD THEOLOGY.

II.

THE Oxford school of theology is honest—we have to deal with frank enemies in the puseyites and their followers, whilst all rational religionists follow a system of evasion and falsehood. Butler proves the difficulties of deism, in order to show that on such a foundation ought to be built a superstructure of revelation. The pseudo liberals and rationalists would endeavour to show, from the argument *a posteriori*, or from effects to cause, “the power, wisdom, and goodness of god, as manifested in the creation.” External nature, the moral and intellectual constitution, the physical condition of man, astronomy and general physics, human anatomy, animal and vegetable physiology, natural history, geology, mineralogy, chemistry, meteorology, and even the operations of the stomach are turned inside out, in order to show adaptation. But these laws

of nature, instead of proving an omnipotent, omniscient, and benevolent creator, rather show a want of intelligence and common humanity in their design. Rather than a superior, they prove an inferior being to man.

Newman, in sermon ix., p. 186. "Faith and reason contrasted, as habits of mind," disowns this attempt to delude people, by enlisting science in the service of faith. He at once renounces the assistance of reason, and confesses that all this array of learned counsel in favour of natural theology, instead of giving support to revelation, leaves the negative position of atheism untouched, and the affirmative proof of a deity and providence no more advanced than it was before. Newman says, "It is a great question whether atheism is not as philosophically consistent with the phenomena of the physical world, taken by themselves, as the doctrine of a creative and governing power." Thus the puseyites dispose of natural theology, nor are they less sincere about the difficulties of revelation.

The *Edinburgh Review* of January devotes three articles more or less to theological controversy and the refutation of puseyism, and we shall see how much less candid are the opinions of the liberal organ. The article on the "Right of private judgment," says of the bible, "we put sufficient faith in the variety and conclusiveness of the evidences of its truth, to believe, that if any man inquire *honestly*, he will believe it true. If there be a case of one who has thus honestly inquired, and still conscientiously believes it false, we shall rather choose to believe that he labours under some invincible obliquity of intellect." We have first to ask, whether this charge of dishonesty, levelled at infidels and puseyites, is not abuse, and whether it does not come with a peculiarly bad grace from those who are writing in favour of the right of private judgment—and from a party who, even on the bench, profess to allow all investigation and expression of opinion, if conducted without reviling language and insult. As to the affectation of putting as an hypothetical improbability, the case of an actual disbeliever in the bible, we may with much more truth retort the charge of dishonesty, and affirm, that without miserable ignorance or invincible obliquity of intellect, the reviewer must have been confident of the falsehood of his own assertion. Orthodox believers, roman catholics, puseyites, and christians of all denominations, as well as infidels, have admitted the falsehoods of the bible, if reason is to judge of the truth of its contents. Many have said, as well as the puseyites, faith is the only evidence in favour of the bible—they believe it because it is full of mysteries, miracles, incomprehensibilities, obscurities, difficulties, and contradictions to reason. We have, therefore, a majority of

two to one, believers and unbelievers, against the arguments, the illiberal defamation, and lying insinuations of the reviewer.

That belief in the bible, according to the *Edinburgh Review*, rests upon reason, if not sufficiently clear from the above, will be plain from what follows, as well as the reverse, that every evidence in favour of the Jew-book and christianity is given up as inconclusive by the puseyites, who rely solely upon faith. The *Review* talks of the "overbalance of evidence in behalf of the bible generally, and of its more important revelations.... The learned and unlearned, if sincere, generally form a very similar notion of its fundamental doctrines.... Let men say what they will, they will find it hard to discover any volume which, in all its great outlines, is plainer than the book of god." How very different the language of Newman, who does not only arraign inspiration, mysteries, prophecies, and miracles at the bar of human reason, but points out that god and Jesus Christ, and the holy trinity, when they appear in person, instead of being more intelligible, play more fantastic tricks than ever before high heaven, and speak utter nonsense to man. Page 211, sermon x., "The nature of faith in relation to reason," "It is singular, that the reasoning of inspired men in scripture, nay, of god himself, are of this recondite nature; so much so, that irreverent minds scarcely hesitate to treat them with the same contempt which they manifest towards the faith of ordinary christians. St. Paul's arguments have long been abandoned, even by avowed defenders of christianity. Nor can it be said surely that the line of thought (if I may dare so to speak) on which some of our ever-blessed saviour's discourses proceed, is more intelligible to our feeble minds." Even Chalmers; in the last edition of his works, vol. iii. p. 385, acknowledges the non-sufficiency of the evidence for christian miracles. The more rationalistic Dr. Arnold abandons the ground of the prophecies, and in a published sermon upon them, declares it to be his opinion and that of the German orthodox divines, that predictions supposed to be fulfilled, are not, or were, so long after their delivery, that the events cannot be said to be consequent upon the prophecies. Those prophecies made in the old testament, which are applied to circumstances in the new testament, he allows were never made for them, but applied to occurrences of the moment, and do not suit those in christianity. Accidental coincidences of words and works may give encouragement and support to weak minds, he says, but are worth nothing more, and he sums up the whole of the prophetic writings and figures as not foretelling facts in future history, but as mere illustrations of the course of good and evil and their results. In the

preceding article on "Oxford Theology," I showed the want of sincerity in the *Edinburgh Review*, first stating scripture precedents in morals and physics to be in direct contradiction with those physical truths and moral duties upon which all mankind are agreed—and then declaring the scriptures to be not the less true for their own great purpose. While the Oxford school, acknowledging this purpose to be faith, confess the "plain fact," and the entire want of reason in the scriptures. Not content with showing the unargumentative nature of all the persons of the trinity, and allowing the unreasonableness of scripture history, in answer to the rationalist, who would defend the moral character of the deity, the puseyites exult in his malevolence, and glory in his injustice, as evidence of his existence, and trial of their faith. The hypocritical liberal and self-styled rationalist, says, "inquire," though he must well know that he is only imposing on the ignorant, or evincing his own superiority in argument over the weak. On such a foundation of pretended reason he builds his faith or that of others—whilst the puseyites reverse the order, and begin with faith, acknowledging as truth what Hume said, that "religion was founded on faith."

W. J. B.

THE FREE INQUIRER'S WHY AND BECAUSE.

WRITTEN BY CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

XV.

(Continued from page 135.)

THERE are certain states of the mind or reasoning faculty, which have been included under the general name of the passions, by some called feelings, by others emotions, and we think the latter term the most precise, as, although all states of the mind are states of feeling, produced by our susceptibility of sensation, yet an emotion is caused by a peculiar condition of the human being, and has specific and distinct characters which should be noted. We feel, when we handle a cricket ball, or taste a delicious ice, but these feelings are very different from those excited by the sight of a woman we love, or a lovely new-born babe murdered before our eyes. Here, in the one case, we have the emotions of love, and in the other we are filled with the emotions of horror. These emotions have been more or less felt by all that bear the human form, and therefore need no particular explanation. Love, hate, pity, anger, hope, joy, sorrow, veneration, and sympathy, are emotions or states of the reasoning faculty, caused by the action of the external world upon us, and our re-action upon the external world. All emotion is of course feeling, but all feeling is not emotion

—as by emotion we mean only certain states of feeling. Admiration, surprise, regret, disgust, jealousy, and many other states of the reasoning faculty, are called emotions, and give birth to desires more or less powerful of fame, revenge, immortality, &c., which are sometimes called appetites—as we say that we have an appetite for a good dinner; but it would not be so well to say that we have an appetite for a sweet young damsel, we then say that we have an inclination or desire for her. Now from appetite and desire springs taste—as we almost invariably find that the well-fed Epicurean has great taste in the selection of his dishes, although sometimes sadly puzzled to discriminate between whole armies of soups and made dishes, whilst men who have a keen appetite display very little taste in the selection, generally resting perfectly satisfied if they can stay the cravings of hunger. But appetite soon begets taste, which is nothing more than the power to discriminate between different impressions, and the selecting of the best means for cultivating and producing the best of those impressions. Practice is necessary to enable the taste to discriminate—it must be exercised upon quantity, before it can have data to discriminate in quality. Of course, right directions will enable it to discriminate the sooner, that is, with practice, upon less quantity, but some amount of practice it must have. In order, however, to be exercised on quantity, there must be the motive to exercise, that is, there must be the desire or appetite for the thing which is to be the object of taste—but appetite mostly grows by what it feeds on, and appetite must have food if it is to exist at all. And, in point of fact, it will be found in most countries, that by an obvious reaction, appetite and taste are in proportion to the abundance of both. Take an example in Greece, when Phidias and Praxiteles exercised their eyes on armies of statues, or in Italy, where music is everywhere used on all occasions, and has a home in every mouth. It would be presumptuous to deny that Phidias might have birth in a country where statues are unfrequent, but then he would be an exile to the land where they are frequent, or he must have some special idiosyncrasy which makes him an alien in the land of his birth. And as to the bulk of the people, if they are to have Phidian tastes, they must have Phidian works at every turn. The popular taste has advanced from Dresden china negro boys and pug dogs, beyond shepherds and shepherdesses, and Spanish bull-fighters, to Canova's dancing girls and the Apollo Belvidere, with a reverence even for the bearded Jupiter, or the broken nosed Theus, in the British Museum. It is the same with the music. Though the barrel-

organ, with its monotony of key, weather-beaten tune, and slack-handed time may be despised by ears polite, yet it was the pioneer of the Moris, and Bochsas, the Grisis, and Lablaches. It will be perceived that taste is one thing and appetite another, as by the latter we simply mean the desire to have something, without much regard to its quality, all being fish that comes to the net—we display taste therefore in discriminating the good from the bad. Some men have an insatiable appetite for knowledge, yet have so low and perverted a taste, or rather no taste at all, that all their acquirements are of a low and vulgar kind, and are, besides, but too often used as sharp instruments with which they goad and prick their fellow-beings. Taste may be shown in the merest trifles as well as in the most important matters, and is to genius what fire is to metal, a purifier of its dross, purging it of all that is foul, producing, in addition, an exquisite polish and dazzling brightness. By the term faculty, we signify the power to do—so that when we say the faculty of reason, we mean the power of thinking, which man possesses in a higher degree than any other animal, hence the poetic expression “noble in reason.” Some are said to be men of genius, by which we mean that they are favoured by nature, and have a more than ordinary share of intellectual power, or, as Walker expresses it, are “endowed with superior faculties.” Dr. Johnson defines genius to be large general powers, accidentally turned in a particular direction. Some men have the faculty of versifying and writing poetically, who, like Pope, display this talent early in life, and, like Pope, “lisp in numbers”—some have the faculty of imitation, and, like the great Matthews,

Eye nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,
And catch the manners living as they rise.

Others, who have neither poetic nor imitative genius, are, nevertheless, highly successful as men of science, and collect with great facility valuable stores of information, and thereby contribute largely to the well-being of humanity—although it must be confessed that it sometimes happens that individuals and societies will collect knowledge into heaps, seemingly forgetful that “knowledge (as well as manure) to be useful should be well spread.” It is not uncommon to see knowledge, like gold in the miser's chest, kept under lock and key—a curse rather than a blessing to its possessor. Some men are mere mathematicians, mineralogists, botanists, or chemists, the first of whom see nothing but lines, squares, circles, and parallelograms—the second has no taste, nor even appetite, for ought but minerals, verily he would feed upon minerals if they were digestible substances—the third can talk of nothing but flowers, or vegetable produc-

tions—while the chemist is nothing out of his laboratory, he is never happy unless stirring his cauldron, and experimentalising over his furnace.

OBITUARY.

The lord giveth and the lord taketh away,
blessed be the name of the lord—

THE DUKE OF SUSSEX IS DEAD.

When will the lord, in his infinite mercy,
rid the world of the genus ?

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Saturday, April 29, 1843.

THE ORACLE OF REASON:

Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE"

EDITED BY "THE MAN PATERSON,"

Sentenced, on January 27, 1843, by Mr. Jardine, of Bow-street, to Three Months' Imprisonment in Tothill Fields Prison, for exhibiting Profane Placards at No. 8, Holywell-street, Strand, London.

No. 73.] *Originally Edited by CHARLES SOUTHWELL, sentenced, on January 15, 1842, by Sir Charles Wetherall, to Twelve Months' Imprisonment in Bristol Gaol, and to pay a fine of £100, for Blasphemy, contained in No. 4.* [PRICE 1D.
Second Editor, G. J. HOLYOAKE, sentenced, on August 15, 1842, by Mr. Justice Erskine, to Six Months' Imprisonment in Gloucester Gaol, for Blasphemy at Cheltenham.

THE PLACARD AGITATION.

II.

Sure oak and threefold brass surrounded his heart,
who first trusted a frail vessel to the merciless
ocean.—HORACE, *Smith's Translation*.

THE merciless sea of religion is not less fearful and dangerous than the wild and tyrant billows; and surely oak and adamant encased that first bold man who entrusted himself to the waves of opposition to priestly dogmas. Who first encountered that bitter malignity that has literally lashed the hearts out of its victims. Such was the spirit with which Mr. Paterson was pursued, for his placard agitation against christian doctrines, that, could it have been done decently, his head would have figured on Temple Bar, and his body would have been burned in Tothill Field's prison. As it was, in one short month they broke his iron constitution, and sent him forth a weak, emaciated man.

In my last paper on this subject I noticed the strange ablepsy which seized free-thinkers of all grades with regard to the important principles involved in the placard agitation. If it be the first principle of mental liberty that every man is to express his sincere opinions, Mr. Paterson, by acting out this principle, ought not to have been without warm sympathy and active support. It is quite proper to dissent from his opinions—quite fair to condemn them—but it was most unjust in free-thinkers to permit the employment of anything but opinion to check his opinions. What sincere man can this day tell that his own sentiments will run in the

fashionable channel to-morrow? and he who fails to defend his fellow-man to-day, forfeits his own claim to protection to-morrow. He who will stand by and see another unjustly beaten down, without doing what in his power lies to prevent it, deserves himself to be beaten down. The *Inquirer* nobly said, "It is perfectly true that we dissent from the opinions of Mr. Paterson, but we also dissent from the manner in which Mr. Paterson is treated by the press. *With us, our brother's right to express his sentiments is as sacred as our own.*" Who can read so glorious a remark—breathing the most generous and dignified spirit of liberty, and not feel an instinctive admiration for the man who penned such honourable words? All independent men will cast the flowers of affection into that man's grave. For that single sentiment, uttered at that critical time, when saints were crying havoc, and almost every man thought it his duty to hound on the dogs of war, the editor of the *Inquirer* deserves to live for ever in the estimation of mankind. But refreshing as it is, and will be while my memory lives, to have found one public man lifting up his voice for equal justice, how humiliating the reflection that this noble act was performed *only* by one opposed to us. Blush! spirit of liberty! blush! that a stranger should be found defending men who had forgotten to defend themselves!

"Historicus," a writer in the *Morning Chronicle*, said, some months ago, that "It is not by continuing to profess opinions and silently to forbear to act upon them, that either religious, or any other prevailing doctrines are to be freed from whatever of an irrational or pernicious character they may contain. But that is a happy day for renovated huma-

nity when first a sincere man, indignant at the more and more severance of profession from practice, stands up a fulfiller in his own person, and a vindicator to the world, of the solemn duty of doing the whole of that which he daily professes he ought to do." Thus Mr. Paterson felt, and reasoned, and acted. He could not continue to profess opinions of the evils of religion and silently forbear acting upon them, and he bravely stood up the fulfiller in his own person of the solemn duty of doing the whole of that which he, and thousands of others every day, professed they ought to do. Should Mr. Paterson have been suffered to be crushed by the rampant followers of Jesus? Should he, without sympathy—generally speaking, without a murmur or a protestation—have been shut up in a prison, and treated with more cruelty than a felon or a murderer?

Of the principle of free expression violated by Mr. Paterson's imprisonment I have now spoken; but there is another principle yet, equally sacred, which has been equally obscured by the fogs of unmanly, palsied fear. It is not enough that I contend that Mr. Paterson should have been held harmless for expressing his opinions, whatever they were, I have yet to learn that any reasonable objection can be taken to the opinions he did express. The principle I refer to, in my justification, is that principle of all principles, the principle of truth. By what show of reason or justice did christians or infidels condemn those placards without a reference to this principle? The *Nonconformist* has truly said, that the objections of dissenters generally to Sir James Graham's factory education bill have been paltry and mean—quite beside the true ground. None have stood on the great principle of dissent, and denied the right of the state to give any religious education. In the same manner, to my seeming, have infidels, in their condemnation of the placard language, overlooked their first principle—truth. It is a full, ample, and most sufficient defence of any language, whether on the lips of christian or atheist, that *it is true*. Call it coarse, low, vulgar, indecent, violent, scurrilous, abusive—just what you please. I repeat it—it is a sufficient defence of such language that it be *true*. Truth blows aside all cavils, despises all squeamishness, bows to no custom, stoops to no conventionalisms, but paints error with the sternness of destruction. All that need have been done with objectors to the placards was simply to say, "show what is false; the language is strong, I allow, but is it required?—is it true?" But instead of this was heard a childish chime of the general cant. As Ebenezer Elliott once said of politicians—they were like sheep in a lane, one leaped over a stick held before it, and though the

stick was instantly withdrawn, every one of the flock leaped at the same spot, without discovering that they had nothing to leap for.

Mr. Shiel said that a woman would rather die, than utter what she read in her bible—and I am satisfied that no tongue, pen, or placard ever yet did justice to the revolting obscenities of the Jew-book. Christians, in being alarmed at the plain truths of the placards, took fright, not at a finished painting, but at a mere crayon sketch, of those ridiculous and disgusting originals which they worship as sacred. But surely infidels being frightened, was quite a gratuitous thing. Their terror was a munificent gift to the saintly world. For infidels to be frightened when christians are frightened, is certainly carrying politeness a great way. Of this matter I now take leave—to infidels I should have said less, had I felt less respect for them. But satisfied that independent blood rolls through their veins, I judge that one reference to this matter is enough to correct the mistake into which they recently fell. One pointing to courage, honour, and sincerity, is enough, and infidels are themselves again. Did I not think so, this paper would be unwritten—for,

On dastards dead to fame
I waste no anger, for they feel no shame.

The report of Mr. Paterson's trial, to which I have before alluded, is now before the world, and no man who approves of bold struggling for mental liberty should be without a copy. It is at once the most extraordinary defence ever made, and the most extraordinary book in our language. I read it as I do *Punch*, after dinner, to promote merriment, on the good old English and anti-maw-worm principle, to laugh and grow fat. More wit and boldness never before met together in a trial for blasphemy. What Paterson said, no other man ever did say in a court, and I do not think that another man living could be found to say it again. As his enemies laid on him, so laid he on christianity, without measure and without mercy. Christians can never again boast that no man has been found boldly and unreservedly to denounce their obscene mysteries in the teeth of punishment and death. It is proud I should be to defend that defence in Saint Paul's Cathedral, against Sidney Smith or the Bishop of Exeter, or in some methodist conference, before their hundred popes.

When the means are at disposal to secure a respectable shop, in a quarter where effect can be given to what has to be said, the placard agitation may again be renewed. Nor shall I be unwilling to share the danger of a course which I with all sincerity can justify.

G. J. H.

IS THERE A GOD?

XXVI.

SHAFTESBURY, in his "Characteristics," vol. 2, page 10, of the Inquiry Concerning Virtue, says: "There are few who think always consistently, or according to one certain hypothesis, upon any subject so abstruse and intricate as the cause of all things, and the economy or government of the universe. That alone, therefore, is to be called a man's opinion which is of any other the most habitual to him, and occurs on most occasions. So that it is hard to pronounce certainly of any man that he is an atheist, because, unless his whole thoughts are at all seasons, and on all occasions, steadily bent against all supposition or imagination of design in things, he is no perfect atheist. In the same manner, if a man's thoughts are not at all times steady and resolute against all imagination of chance, fortune, or ill design in things, he is no perfect theist. But if any one believes more of chance and confusion than of design, he is to be esteemed more an atheist than a theist, from that which predominates or has the ascendant." Shaftesbury goes on to name a dozen natural religionists, according to the side to which they are most inclined, of which four are different sorts of atheists. But the real difficulty is in the measure and standard of atheism by which atheists are to be tried—and I doubt whether Shaftesbury, in his estimate of atheism or an atheist, has not committed a grievous inaccuracy. I think few who profess themselves atheists profess themselves "steadily bent against all supposition or imagination of design in things." Every body seems to admit design, but not the consequence theists would jump to. Design means that it is, no thing—no design. That there is no ground to make out an atheist on this account, Brougham seems to think, when he says of Paley's Natural Theology: "He assumes the very position which alone sceptics dispute. In combatting him they would assert that he begged the whole question, for certainly they do not deny, at least in modern times, *the fact of adaptation.*" Though this appears a quibble of Brougham's, or a pique at the Bridgewater Treatises, for if Paley goes too much upon the supposition that atheists did not allow any design in things, the aim of his book is certainly written to prove that the design establishes the designer. We are not certain that Shaftesbury does not mean by design in things the real question, whether they were preconceived in thought, and then made by any other thing, not as we propagate our species, but as we would make a watch. But when he gives the alternative of chance or fortune in the place of design, in the inclination to-

wards atheism, we cannot allow of such a supposition as militating against the fact of adaptation as allowed by atheists. It seems one of those vulgar notions of chance, so often ascribed to and rejected by the atheist, and so satisfactorily disposed of by every one of them—Mirabaud, Meslier, Hume, and a writer in the *Freethinker's* journal.

W. J. B.

PROGRESS OF FREE DISCUSSION—
WITH A SPECIAL NOTICE OF THE
"THEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION."

THE prevalence of meetings for discussion, in which the utmost freedom and latitude is permitted to controversy, consistent with the ordinary observance of the courtesies of society, is, amid many discouraging signs, an evidence of an increased intellectual activity, and the practical recognition of the important principle of free expression of opinion. The metropolis contains numerous places of resort, in which particular nights are set apart for these purposes. Perhaps the description which commences this paper does not strictly apply to the generality of such meetings—some excluding religion, either by rule or practice—some discouraging extreme questions—some not tolerating, or scarcely tolerating, ultra speakers—but there are some well-conducted places, as the "Yorkshire," in the city—"Watts's," in Holborn—the "Hope," in Wardour-street, in which much good temper, spirit, and freedom are preserved. With the "Globe," in Great Titchfield-street, a house well-known to the socialists in the City-road, and some other resorts I am not acquainted. The Social Institutions are well-known. The "Theological Association" it is my present purpose chiefly to mention, its objects being well defined, and its plans being in some degree organised. The prospectus was not long since transferred entire to the pages of the *Oracle*—the objects, as the name implies, purely theological inquiry, the overthrow of theological error—and the means, the periodical holding of meetings for free discussion, lectures, conversations, readings, &c. A library to be also added, and, above all, the establishment of a class, for the very important object of improvement in composition, public speaking, and investigation. The composition of the society, too, is excellent, and may be almost considered unique, being composed, as one of the prospectuses states, of persons of every shade of opinion, from the evangelical christian to the pure atheist. The efficient carrying on of the proposed class is of high importance. Students in theology, whether of an *infidel* or of a *faithful* turn, are sadly beclouded through a too great

reliance on partial sources of information. Confined to one sort of writing or teaching only or mainly, they really proceed much more frequently to "strengthen prejudice, than to investigate truth and overthrow error." The mingling of persons of professed contrary opinions in such studies, pursued in the right spirit, must be productive of great advantage. I say of professed contrary opinions, not as being the best calculated to investigate, but as being the best whom it is practicable to congregate—society, as at present constituted, not affording individuals who have not been compelled more or less to prejudge. In an association such as this, however, there would be every facility to rub down untenable and gross prejudices on either side. There would also, by a more general acquaintance with the leading objections on either side, where sides had been taken, soon be, as it were, a balance struck, and the crasy assertions of half-witted, half-informed, or superficial writers or talkers would be set aside, and not be continually reproduced, to be as continually refuted. Thus a deal of valuable time, labour, breath, and paper would be saved, and only points worthy of investigation, which would furnish plenty of admirable material, would occupy the attention. This is the leading idea which induced the introduction of that excellent item in the "circular," worded, "The registering of theological arguments, distinguishing such as remain unanswered, such as have been replied to without being disposed of, or such as have been refuted."

Similar societies in the provinces or elsewhere would do well to open a correspondence with the London association, for mutual hints and instructions in their common objects.

A slight outline of one evening's proceedings will convey, in the most interesting and perhaps instructive manner, the interests, aims, and operations of the society.

The first of the series of lectures announced by the prospectuses of the association was, on Tuesday evening, the 25th, delivered by Mr. Skelton. Subject, "Was Jesus Christ a real or fictitious person?" The room in Mr. Bailey's coffee-house, 42, New Compton-street, High-street, temporarily held by the society, was crowded, and the attention of the audience continued undiminished to the end. The tenor of the observations was to the effect that there was no genuine, authenticated, and disinterested testimony to the existence of Jesus Christ, or the Jesus of the gospels. The accredited, or least discredited, historians of antiquity, either contained no mention whatever of the name and acts of Christ, or contained such a mention of such person and events, as carried on the face of the statement its own refutation. Of this kind was the slight passage in Flavius

Josephus, which the lecturer asserted was given up by the most eminent and learned christian divines as spurious and interpolated. Men had been long prepared for the coming of an incarnate divinity, who was to suffer death for the sins of man upon the cross. As an evidence of the prevalence of this notion among the religions of Hindostan, the Rev. Mr. Maurice was quoted, who presents plates of the oriental Christna, or Christ, bruising the serpent's head, with others still more strongly confirmatory of the eastern parentage of this religious idea. From these nations it is conjectured to have passed to the Egyptians, thence to the Hebrews, who more slightly, and obscurely, and vaguely entertained the expectation of the advent of an incarnate god. The ready credence of the miracles was not only to be expected, given by ignorant and superstitious people, to whom they were related in accounts assumed to be sacred, many years after the supposed date of such occurrences, but was the more likely to lay hold of the popular mind, from the strong excitement into which the religious world was thrown at this time by the current expectation by many of the approaching end of the world. Besides, men were prepared for great changes in theological dogmas, especially such as embraced or modified mystic doctrines of the trinity of the orientals, or the *divine word* of some of the western theologians or platonists. These mysterious, dim, and shadowy expectations, and this extraordinary excitement of the time predisposed to the ready reception of the doctrines promulgated at the period of the supposed teachings of Christ by various sects, known by various denominations, as well as to the full persuasion of the truth of any recitals of marvellous deeds performed by a mystic personage, which might be put forth with sufficient confidence and pretensions of a divine mission. Thus it was that the apostolic doctrines succeeded in making so deep an impression in concurrence with numerous other sects on the contemporary religionists, and thus it was that the apostolic accounts obtained such general credence from a period somewhat subsequent to the date of their exertions. Mr. Skelton terminated his discourse with the opinion strongly and emphatically enunciated, that till the curse of bible-dicta, inspired deeds, and god-influences was removed, small hopes could be entertained for the prospects of the human race.

At the termination of the lecture a discussion ensued.

Mr. Smith considered that the case had not been in the slightest point sustained by the lecturer. That the Jewish scriptures contained remarkably plain and strikingly verified predictions which every subsequent account, sacred or profane, had satisfactorily

corroborated. The passage from Josephus, which had been branded as an interpolation, was as genuine as any other portion of the history, as was proved by an Alexandrian manuscript now lodged at the British Museum, in which the passage formed part of the regular text. He referred to Tacitus and Pliny, as having made mention of the christians. Mr. Smith strongly animadverted on the wholesale scepticism which rejects the best attested historical statements. As well might one doubt the existence of Cæsar, Napoleon, or Oliver Cromwell. Reference was also made to the testimony of Macrobius, Phlegon, and another authority, quoted from Addison, as testifying to the existence and acts of Christ. Mr. Smith concluded by deprecating a course which evidently showed that the previous speaker was, however concealed from himself, very considerably warped in judgment, and that bigotry, however imputed to the religious world, was a marked characteristic of the so-called philosophical.

Mr. Cohen made some observations in which the nature of the scriptural doctrines and statements were rather adverted to than the question of the existence of Jesus.

Mr. Wright supported the first speaker after the lecture, contending more strongly for the precise terms in which the holy bible predicts the events connected with the mission of the messiah, and the exact fulfilment of these predictions. Indian glimpses of the doctrine of the trinity he referred to their occasional intercommunications with the Jews or scattered tribes.

Mr. Skelton, in reply, denied that there was any existing manuscript of a date at which suspicion could be fairly set at rest, supposing even that we could trust to an isolated manuscript in this matter. The one named was of a date centuries after the period at which Josephus wrote, and after the practice of forgery and interpolation had become a constant trick among the christian fathers and others. Tacitus and Pliny made mention of the christians, not Christ, or rather a sect which they designated in the most contemptible and reproachful terms. The other authorities quoted by those who had commented on his observations, were also of a date long subsequent to the period of the supposed divine or miraculous transactions. The supposition of the prior entertainment of the Jews of the doctrines connected with the trinity, incarnation, miraculous conception, &c. was quite untenable, being a comparatively modern people, having derived their principal notions from those among whom they were enslaved or associated, as the very ancient Indian chronology determines. He repudiated unfair bias, having with great sincerity, ardour, and a pure love of truth, conducted his

inquiries, and having been forced to his present conclusion, by what appeared the strongest weight of evidence.

The meeting terminated with the announcement of Mr. James Smith's lecture on that night week, on "Universal contra-distinguished from Sectarian Theology."

It is highly essential for the Theological Association to carry out and extend its operations, and for this an *Institution* should be obtained. This hint may suffice to obtain suggestions, perhaps other assistance, from those who have it in their power to forward such an undertaking, which has hitherto been worked up in the teeth of many difficulties and disabilities.

Independantly of the ordinary subscriptions, a sovereign was presented a week or two back, which was immediately invested in prospectuses with syllabuses of lectures.

The forwarding of books, which, either by way of loan or gift, is practicable with most persons, would be very serviceable. The meetings being thrown open free, renders extraneous aid the more necessary.

M. Q. R.

THE EDUCATION BILL AND THE DISSENTERS.

See how these christians love one another.

FABER wrote a work called "The Difficulties of Infidelity," which being literally interpreted, means the difficulties of infidels removed, and whoever has read this work will agree with me, that there is not an objection therein urged but he himself removes. The grand object of Mr. F.'s work is to show that without revelation we cannot know of the existence of one god or of thirty, the works of a Paley and a Brougham notwithstanding. To the readers of the *Oracle*, a refutation of the revelation twaddle would be worse than useless, as it has been done over and over again, but still Faber's book has its use—it so cuts up deists, and infidels of that stamp, that the trouble of refuting them is saved us, and so far Faber is a coadjutor in the good work of theological demolition. Now, if we only looked a little more closely to the doings of the gentle lambs of Jesus—or occasionally glanced at the organs where, from time to time, they display their love to each other, we should discover some choice morsels, that would be a beacon just to show how the land lies with them. We have long asserted that religion is the curse of curses—the drag-chain of human liberty and the foe to human improvement—all this we have proved by reference to past and present history—from the principles themselves have we shown their evil tendency, and that degradation and demoralisation is a necessary

result of the introduction of religion in any country. But, say the religionists, "your arguments are only abuse, and your weapons ridicule." Without attempting to show that the greatest abuse they fear is truth, and the only ridicule they dread a faithful exposé, I shall just give a specimen of what they say of each other's doctrines—those doctrines, too, for which martyrs, in the height of idiotic lunacy suffered at the stake—that catechism which costs the nation ten millions annually for its promulgation, here its nature is spoken of plainly and without reserve—churchmen and dissenters, both drawing their meekly doctrine from the one divinely-inspired book, bespattering each other with the filth drawn from its godly pages.

The *Birmingham Advertiser* of the 13th ult., contains a letter from a "Sunlay School Teacher," in which, after abusing the church and "its abominations," concludes by stating, "That sooner than let his children learn the church catechism—HE WOULD GIVE THEM POISON." And at Hull, last week, a Mr. Thompson, a baptist minister, at a public meeting, declared, "That he would resist the education bill even until BLOOD FLOWED!"

None of the *Oracle* readers need be told that this and a thousand other disputes have arisen out of the present war against education, so consistently maintained by religionists, for by ignorance they confess they live, move, and have their being—a confession it is impossible to controvert. "When rogues fall out honest men get their own," says the proverb, and I confidently anticipate much real good to result to benighted humanity from the present war of the religious rogues. May their doctrines, their dogmas, their rancour, their pettiness, their uncharitableness, their bloated and ignorant bigotry, their arrogance, their selfsufficiency, their tyranny, and their inconsistency share the fate of the celebrated Kilkenny cats, with this exception, that not a vestige may be left to tell of their previous existence.

Now, suppose that, as atheists, we never knew the benign influence of religion, surely the evidence of a teacher of religion, one who understands all the *pros* and *cons* of divine grace, and the other workings of the holy spirit—acting as we should upon the principle, "that the likes of him knows the likes of them"—such evidence, I say, would be worth something, even though he should be as big a rogue as the party he condemns, a probability far from extravagant. We have seen what this dissenting Sunday-school teacher says of the church catechism—and a fair sample he is of the spiteful and vulgar tutors provided by the canting hypocrites of dissent for the poor children of our labouring community—and now let us see what is said of this catechism by its supporters and ad-

mirers. Mr. O'Croly said at Cork, 1835, that "The most sublime morality is inculcated in the protestant catechism, for it is founded on the word of god," and Hannah More has characterised it as "The very grammar of christianity"—yet the dissenters would rather poison their children than give them the "word of god" from a church vessel, or teach them "the grammar of christianity" from any books but their own. Was ever a fairer proof given of the bloody-mindedness, immorality, unnaturalness, hellish hate, and vindictiveness which pervades the bodies and minds of these *righteous* villains? Murder itself—the murder too of innocent children by their parent—is with them the purest morality, when contrasted with the horrid crime of permitting them to save their souls by imbibing any other nostrum than the one in which their miserable and bigotted parent has faith! The morality of murder was established as a *christian* principle by the deliberate, and cold-blooded murder of the baby-god by his ferociously-cruel and cruelly-ferocious papa.

But we have not yet done with this matter. Churchmen were not, of course, likely to hear such reflections cast upon their faith and sit quietly by—to hear their heaven-born catechism treated as the "gammon" of christianity, rather than its "grammar," was too provoking—atheists could hardly stand such treatment, let alone god-mongers, who were never remarkable for forbearance. In the paper of the following week, as might be expected, a churchman charges the dissenters with being "Deficient of moral duty, and that nothing can exceed the rabid malice and hatred which they not only bear in their hearts, but to which they have actually given utterance in the lying and slandering they have spoken with their mouths. And no wonder—out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Good again—when the godly sing each other's praises, they do it right lustily, there is no piano about their sweet voices, but forte, fortissimo is the order of the day. But what is the result to mankind of this "holy war?"—the greater demoralization of the unfortunate dupes who take part in the combat. Still we have great faith in human progression, and doubt not but some truth-seekers are benefitted by the hypocrisy which these hateful wretches occasionally unveil.

T. P.

OXFORD THEOLOGY.

III.

IN proportion as a man quits orthodoxy, without reaching positive, genuine heterodoxy, so his ignorance or hypocrisy seems to increase. In the wreck of belief, the wish to hold by a straw becomes intense when there is nothing

else left. However more or less extended the infidelity of dissenters and liberals, they have a faith which, not so comprehensive in its objects, is more tenacious in its single points, and more impervious to reason on those subjects, than the omnivorous digestion of the blind believer and infidel to human intellect. A passage was quoted (p. 108) from the sermon of Mr. Woodgate, on "The Study of Morals," to show that any claim to superior morality on the part of christianity, was not well founded, and like the other arguments of reason, was no evidence in favour of the religion of Jesus. The celebrated American preacher, Channing, who was a unitarian, founds revelation on the authority of reason, talks of the insanity of atheism, and the narrow-mindedness of sceptics, and insists upon the superior morality of Jesus as alone proof sufficient of his divine mission. A writer in Blackwood, p. 112, vol. xlvii. to insure this belief, which seems his only hope, from an unlucky leak he had discovered, argues that the moral doctrines of the unitarians must be an historical falsehood, as forestalling the necessity of any new teacher or new founder of a religion. He says, "The only instant touchstone for the pretensions of Christ lay in the character of his morality. But he who derives it from some elder and unknown source, at one step evades what he could not master. He overthrows without opposition—and enters the ruins caused by internal explosion." The Jew and the unitarian, in their half-way houses, say, the one that the old testament disproves the new, the other, that there is no foundation for the trinity in the gospels. The *Edinburgh Review* says, there is an overbalance of evidence for all the more important revelations of the bible, and that the scriptures only contain some obscurities on minor points—"the learned and the unlearned agree on the fundamental doctrines of christianity." But is not the trinity thought to be a fundamental doctrine of christianity? And the puseyites come, candidly forward, and coincide with the Jew, the unitarian, and the sceptic, "that the private student of scripture would not ordinarily gain a knowledge of the *gospel* from it." "Such a doctrine," says the *Reviewer*, "is an insult to common sense." But does not the whole argument of the puseyites go to prove that religion is an insult, and intended to be such to every exercise of human reason? "Are we to believe (say the hypocrites) that the fundamental doctrines of the bible remain an inscrutable mystery?" Are not original sin, the incarnation, the atonement fundamental doctrines and inscrutable mysteries? However great their impudence in vague and general assertions, we imagine that few of them would undertake to make these vexed questions clear to human comprehen-

sion. "Or," say they, "did the great teacher the author of the bible sent, teach in so peculiar a manner, that even the more important truths he taught remained unintelligible?" They have had their answer from Newman, who says neither god nor man, on divine business, ever spoke to be understood—faith, tradition, church, must interpret the language of heaven. The whole subject of revelation on which faith is exercised, is indefensible, the puseyites do not attempt to plead its cause, they leave that to heaven—whilst they hold fast by faith, they do not want the world in their favour, they reject its assistance, which they know cannot be really given, and which they believe tends rather to unsettle minds than make converts. Newman says, p. 48, sermon iii, "We must put aside the indirect support afforded to revelation, by the countenance of the intellectually-gifted portion of mankind, I mean in the way of influence. Reputation for talent, learning, or scientific knowledge, has natural and just claims on our respect, and recommends a cause to our notice—so does power, and in this way power, as well as intellectual endowments, is necessary to the maintenance of religion, in order to secure from mankind a hearing for an unpleasant subject—but power, when it has done so much, attempts no more, or if it does, it loses its position, and is involved in the fallacy of persecution. Here the parallel holds good, it is as absurd to argue men, as to torture men, into believing." Difficult-reared christians, have always been told by their theological nurses in the evidences of christianity, that, at any rate, the wise and the learned believed it, and therefore all succeeding generations ought to be convinced, whether they thought it true or not. The only argument in law and religion counsel and judges use on matters of blasphemy, would be annihilated by this Newman's opinion. What would Lord Kenyon's blissful state of ignorance say to the Oxford divine? He, Lord Kenyon, in summing up, produced the instance of the mightiest monarch of the Roman empire, the apostate Julian writing in favour of christianity, and gaining the title of the apostle? What will the Bridgewater-treatise men, and the followers of their camp, Brougham and Babbage, say to this contemptuous dismissal of their forces? The puseyites do not care for the attacks of useful-knowledge men, or their proffered support—probably they would prefer the former, the very assistance of reason, whilst it gives the lie to the orthodox, only exposes the more to humanity the vulnerable parts of revelation. The puseyites at once decline all argument, for or against—these are human means—they adopt in their own writings a certain obscurity, and do not

LIBRARY OF REASON.

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ON Saturday, June 3, the proprietors of the *Oracle of Reason* will publish No. II. of their "Library of Reason," to be continued on the first Saturday of every month. The "Library of Reason," will consist of re-prints of rare and valuable works, which are either out of print or too expensive for the general reader. No. II. will contain

HUME'S ESSAY UPON

"LIBERTY AND NECESSITY,"

Forming part of his "Inquiry concerning Human Understanding."

The value of Mr. Hume's writings are so well known, and his philosophy so generally esteemed, that it is scarcely necessary to do more than mention the portion of his works we are about to publish, and confidently leave his merits to the appreciation of the public—but the following, from the pen of a talented contemporary, being both instructing and illustrative, will not be out of place:

"Turn we now to David Hume—perhaps of all metaphysical writers, ancient or modern, the most clear, convincing, and profound. He had the rare merit, so eulogised by Cicero, of enforcing, or rather *insinuating* truths the most abstruse and harsh in soft and transparent diction. Without injustice it may be affirmed, that his writings display all the elegance and captivating graces of Addison, without his eternal *cant*. As England's historian he is universally known—and now that *faction* is put to silence, almost universally admired. Nevertheless, I conceive that, as a philosophical essayist, he is most advantageously distinguished. Gibbon, as a historian, may claim at least equal rank—but I am ignorant that any writer has treated questions of religion and morals, as well as of political philosophy, with the ease, the grace, the temper, and the truthfulness of Hume. His 'Essays concerning Human Understanding,' also 'Essays Moral and Political,' are deservedly ranked among the most finished and fascinating productions in our language. They abound in those 'careless inimitable beauties' that even Gibbon despaired to imitate. Sir James Mackintosh, who was no favourer of Hume's philosophy, declared, in the generous *spirit* of enlightened criticism, that 'his (Hume's) manner is more lively, more easy, more ingratiating, and, if the word may be applied, more amusing than that of any other metaphysical writer. Of the Moral and Political Essays, the same critic observes: 'they must ever be regarded as the best models in any language of the short but full, of the clear and agreeable, though deep, discussion of difficult questions.'"—*Investigator*.

The "Library of Reason" will be of uniform size and appearance with the *Oracle of Reason*, and be published at the same price, namely, ONE PENNY per number, containing nearly double the usual quantity of information given for that sum by the Liberal or Infidel Press.

THEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION.

May 9th, M. Ryall, "The God-Basis Unsundered for a Science of Morality."

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Saturday, May 6, 1843.

affect the elegancies or even correct rules of literature. "Controversy," says Newman, "at least in this age, does not lie between the hosts of heaven, Michael and his angels on the one side, and the powers of evil on the other, but it is a sort of night battle, where each fights for himself, and friend and foe stand together. When men understand what each other mean, they see, for the most part, that controversy is either superfluous or hopeless." Newman admits, like Pascal and McNeile, that revelation is inconsistent with benevolence—he gives to many liberals a true picture of themselves, and holds up a mirror to their hypocrisy, in depicting the state of mind into which benevolent men (as he calls them) are in danger of falling in the present age. While they pursue objects tending as they conceive towards the good of mankind, it is by degrees forced upon their minds that revealed religion thwarts their proceedings, and believing fully that christianity must fall before the increasing illumination of the age, yet they wish to secure it against direct attacks, and to provide that it no otherwise fall than, as it unavoidably must, at one time or other, as every inflexible instrument and every antiquated institution—crumble under the hands of the great innovator, who creates new influences for new emergencies, and recognises no right divine in a tumultuous and shifting world.

W. J. B.

ROYAL BIRTH.

WE had hardly finished our extra half-pint of fourpenny, and felt quite cheered at the lord having taken to himself the Duke of Sussex, when the alarming intelligence arrived that another incubus was whelped by the royal tigress, Queen Alex. Victoria, and we are sorry to announce that up to the present moment the cub and dam are both well.

T. P.

NOTTINGHAM UNION.—The following is a list of the answers given to the question, "Of what Religious persuasion are you?" by the 1804 persons admitted into the union during the last two years, ending 25th March 1843:—

- 340 Churchmen.
- 223 Methodists.
- 126 Baptists.
- 22 Independents.
- 74 Papists.
- 26 Protestants.
- 15 Dissenters.
- 2 Unitarians.
- 3 Presbyterians.
- 1 Johanna.
- 1 Sandimanian.
- 1 Jew.
- 1 Chartist.
- 2 New Testament Disciples.
- 13 Did not know.
- 197 Were not particular.
- 752 Were of no religion at all.
- 5 Sundries.

THE ORACLE OF REASON:

Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE"

No. 74.]

EDITED BY "THE MAN PATERSON."

[PRICE 1D.]

WORKINGS OF RELIGION— AND NECESSITY FOR ITS OVERTHROW.

IN WHICH THE FOLLOWING POINTS
ARE BRIEFLY INTRODUCED.

Objections to theological controversy—Of several sorts of sceptical objectors—The man of business—The theoretical socialist—The social economist—No fear of over-stimulating many to public action—Owen vindicated for his memorable anti-religious declaration—Till the extirpation of religion, as an element in social science, no security from oppressive authority—Connection of true republican organisation, with an abandonment of religious fictions—Necessity of the universal diffusion of true views instead of false speculations.

THE practical bearing of free theological inquiry seems to be generally misunderstood. Not unfrequently is it positively denied that there is any useful object connected with such pursuits. "What is the use of your troubling yourself with religious questions?" says the man of business, though himself a sceptic or investigator in his closet; "it brings no grist to the mill." The mere socialist remarks, "You had better leave theology entirely alone, it is quite enough to expound our principles." The practical socialist or social-economist counsels you to "give up speculative questions, and get the land." These respective parties have, I admit, very excellent notions, but they are notions of one part of a question only, or perhaps they may be characterised rather as half-notions. Strongly impressed as I am with the vast importance of the overthrow of the class of errors coming under the denomination of religious, I would deem it rank folly to thrust forward theological questions to the exclusion of those belonging to the personal interests of either individuals or the community. There is but little fear of any very general neglect of matters personal and domestic, for those of a collective or a public nature. The difficulty encountered in keeping a man's head above water, maintaining his social po-

sition—perhaps the strong desire to arrive a step higher, and gain admission among a more important, or rather a more esteemed, grade, are generally paramount influences. Moralists and politicians have always had to contend with the strong tendency towards individual or family aggrandisement, to the exclusion of any active concern for the good of the whole. The prevalence of party politics may be cited as opposing this view, but an analysis of them will undeceive us. Party politicians may, in the first place, be said to make much more noise than they do work. There is a deal of stir, and fizz, and splutter made by very few people. The lookers-on are mostly magnified in the grandiloquent reports of the press, and of them the majority take little or no interest in the agitation, beyond the passing moment. Politicians, in the true sense of the word, can scarcely ever obtain a hearing, while the most miserably factious schemers will obtain adherents or a party of some sort—those who address themselves to the understanding, who work to the root of the evil and apply right principles to the rectification of abuses, must labour comparatively unheeded. The great Bentham, politician and moralist, is a distinguished example. It is but now that, in his own country, his noble and persevering efforts are becoming known and appreciated. It is just, then, to conclude that the tendency is to apathy and indifference in regard to great and extensive action for the good of the species, and to eager and absorbing attention for self and family. There is then, no fear of unduly urging, persuading, or instructing men in the way of public spirit.

The socialist enamoured of "the principles," and who has neither ears, eyes, nor understanding for aught else, would do well to recollect, that there is no one great branch of his philosophy which is not materially concerned with roots of religious belief of every kind. When Robert Owen made the great, important, and startling announcement to the astonished world, through the medium of the mighty engine of the press, that "all the religions of the world are based on error," the intelligence struck the body-public like an electric shock. Recovered from their surprise, and having time to look into the blank faces each of the other, the splendid visions he had called up of poor men's palaces and rich men's paradises, and, ultimately, of all

men's felicity, faded away and were dimmed or obfuscated by theological fogs and darkness. They withdrew their support. But that which they did not, because they could not, withdraw, was the spirit of investigation which his bold assertion had stimulated. And while the economical department has attracted and is attracting much attention, the philosophy of the subject is deeply influencing the studies of the most reflective, and the common thoughts of the ordinarily intelligent. This would be a long theme on which to enlarge. But the grand stimulus to the diffusion of knowledge and the obviously humanising tendencies of legislation (though the latter is alloyed by much morbid nonsense, false sympathy, and ignorance of principle), sufficiently illustrate the workings of the philosophy which excludes supernaturalism and promotes humanity. The social economist opposed to the direction of our energies towards the subversion of religious error, considering that communities and parallelograms are the only legitimate objects of attainment, may also be referred to the above observations. I would add for him, that supposing the plan of concealment of his real views respecting religious error had been adopted by Mr. Owen, and further supposing that he had succeeded earlier in establishing "home colonies," what would have been the result? That Mr. Owen's splendid machinery would have already been in the hands of the aristocracy, and turned by them against the interests of the many. This was effected with Mr. Owen's propositions respecting infant education. The dissenting, and after them the dominant clergy, laid hold of the scheme, by which they hold in intellectual bondage the little-ones of the toilers. How stands the case now with the community scheme? If it has not already, by indisputable success, demonstrated its practicability, it has, at all events, become more familiar to the comprehensions of the many, untainted by religious error, unattended by religious perplexities, unvitiated by religious strife, uncursed by religious rancour. When the many have obtained right ideas of the principles of social arrangements, having discarded speculations absurd, inconsistent, and deeply injurious to their interests, then, and only then, are they safely prepared for extensive fundamental reforms.

While others manage, control, govern—the parties interested and to be benefitted, being managed, controlled, and governed, and at the same time ignorant of the principles on which the directors act, the governed many will still always peril their prospects and permanent success, whether the governing few be sincere or insincere.

This must always be the case as long as ignorance of politics or public management shall prevail in a nation or a community.

Ignorance of the grossest kind must continue while theological speculations of any kind are preached and received as incontrovertible truths, especially when such speculations enter extensively and radically into every governmental, social, moral, and domestic concern. Not a government, a council, a committee, a board of management that *alone* need knowledge or honesty. The requisite information must be *diffused*—the honesty follows, as a matter of course. Rulers may commence with integrity and end in roguery, a people or community cannot be dishonest to themselves. They have been sacrificed both by craft and ignorance on the part of administrations, whether despotic or popular. This could not happen, let the mass once know their real interests, once be rightly informed of the best and speediest way of their attainment, and by gradual practice be fitted to take an active part in the general management. Preparatory to the reception of this most important knowledge, the reasoning powers must be cultivated. As long as reason is depreciated for faith, as revelation stands for fact, religion for morals, so long must the intellectual preparation for the important functions of the legislator and the administrator of public affairs, be postponed. And these qualifications must be more or less possessed by every member, or every member must be capable of exercising them in a soundly constituted and well-organised association.

Is the man of the world, the theoretical socialist, or the communist, swayed by the reasons here adduced? Supposing them and addressing them as rationalists, they are presumed in this paper to be open to reasonable objections to exclusivism, even though entertained by those who have discarded a vast amount of error. If their scruples are not satisfied, if still dubious of the propriety of theological investigation or energetic action for the overthrow of this class of error, they are invited and requested to express their dissent, which will receive most careful consideration from,

M. Q. R.

Sipsius says that it was often in the mouth of Frederic the Second, emperor of Germany, that there were three notorious impostors, who had seduced the human race, Moses, Christ, and Mahomet. Or, according to Matthew Paris, quoted by Burton ("Anatomy of Melancholy") these were his words, "Three impostors, Moses, Christ, and Mahomet, that they might rule the world, led away the people of their time. If the chiefs of the empire would adhere to my government, I would give them a much better rule of belief and practice."

POLITICS FOR POLITICIANS.

II.

There is an unseen power lies in the mass
Of human slaves, which if aroused, would sweep
Not mortal tyrants only from their thrones,
By one blind crash, but all their blind supporters.

And I for one, would lend a hand to this,
Rather than kings, and priests, and common theives,
Should make the life of man an endless curse.

WORKING-MEN, have you ever asked yourselves seriously why this fair world should ever be the scene of triumph for the haughty aristocrat, or purse-proud shopocrat, and the theatre of your tribulation? Your labour is the source of all wealth, and yet your poverty is proverbial—you starve in the midst of the wealth of your own creation! Have you ever asked yourselves why you are made in every age to be the playthings of all ambitions, the pasture of all tyrannies, or the fettered slaves of capital, the victims of grasping avarice? The earth is cultivated only by your toils, and adorned only by your hands—shall then its fruits ever accumulate in the hands of those who employ them in the punishment of your hopeless and unmerited poverty—while virtue goes without encouragement, and industry without reward? When *in work*, your labour is incessant, and your remuneration scanty—when you have produced an abundance, you have to sit down and starve, until others see fit to consume it. Hence, distress, the messenger of death, passes over your homes, not because of your idleness, but because of your industry! When you repine, you are called “discontented”—when you murmur, you are termed “seditious”—and when you speak, you are designated “rebellious.” Have men ever seriously thought why they are content to hold their lives at the breath of a few cold-blooded monopolists, banded under the title of priests, kings, and aristocrats, who convert our towns into dens of vice and wretchedness—mere accumulations of oppressive exaction—receptacles of tyranny, where

Wealth accumulates, and men decay—

the charnel houses in which men, women, and children, are by thousands steamed and sweated into eternity? No, mankind have not given the matter serious reflection, or the whole complicated machinery of cunning, fraud, force, and tyranny, yclept government, would have been seen as clear as daylight, and the damnable kingly, priestly, and aristocratic delusions annihilated. Ignorance alone is the cause of man's slavery—and until that ignorance is removed, the walls of St. Stephen's will still re-echo with peals of derisive laughter, at every fresh tale of your woes and miseries. It is

time men learnt the first principles of government—it is time they instituted the important inquiry, whether the present rulers and laws are the best that can be instituted—and if they are not, the fiat should go forth, which would sweep away all the diseases of the state, and establish a reign of freedom, more in accordance with the reason of man. The real object for which governments was instituted was for the providing justice and protection for *all*, or, in other words, for the promotion of the general welfare. Where a government neglects this duty, the fault is in the people, who forgetting the real object of society, degenerate into mere slaves of the power instituted for their moral and physical protection and improvement. It requires no arguments, when we view the vast amount of poverty on the one hand, and effeminate luxury on the other—the poor worker, and the rich lounge—to prove that governments exist, not for the millions, but for the aggrandisement of a band of crowned, titled, and mitred ruffians.

When we take into consideration the great obstacles to human emancipation—our divisions into sects, as whigs, tories, churchmen, catholics, and the thousand-and-one dissenting denominations—fighting amongst ourselves whether god prefers men being ducked over head and ears, or only sprinkled on the face—and whether he damns to all eternity children of a “span long.” Thus are mankind turned from their real interests, and set by the ears about chimeras which are fostered and encouraged by state and priestly knaves, assisted by silly dupes—thus have execrable villains, like a George the Third, and his heartless tools, established their usurpation, and banished liberty from the land. Let us have a government that will promote and encourage the elevation of morals. Let it be a government of rational beings, for the security, comfort, and happiness of the starving millions.

An executive should ennoble the minds of its citizens, by holding up to them the idea of the general good. This should be the leading feature of all legislation.

Government is supposed necessary for the welfare of mankind, and as it exists for the whole, all should have a share in the selection of its measures. Where the majority have no hand in the controul of the laws, no obedience is due from them to such laws, in fact, it is both absurd and immoral to countenance a system you know to be unjust to your fellow-citizens. Until men shall have learned to live without paid legislators, it is necessary they should consider the most useful and least expensive mode of carrying out the original compact of society. I think none so suitable as the *republican*. Those acquainted with Roman history, will bear

witness, that during the three hundred years which that nation groaned under monarchy, and its usual attendant war, Rome became the scourge of nations—the Romans then were the butchers of their kind—until Numa Pompilius the republican came, and by his example and his maxims overthrew the monarchy of Rome, and turned its restless spirits to the cultivation of the arts of peace. It was then Rome reached the very summit of her splendour. We applaud and venerate Rome as a republic. Republicanism was the blooming era of a new life of glory, of enterprise, and of power. Monarchy came again, and the wings of Roman virtue were clipped. Then Rome was trodden under foot by barbarian hordes, who contemplated in awe the gigantic skeleton of republican greatness and virtue. Yes, the robe of the monarch was the winding-sheet of Rome. The stern virtue of her republic was the beginning of her rise—but the robbery and licentiousness of her monarchs were the signs of her ruin, and her eventual overthrow.

Such is monarchy even in our own land—the nurse of luxury, the executioner of states. Its vices are upheld by the swords of a base and interested faction. Its soldiers, or “hired assassins,” maintain it in feudalism—its adherents cling to it, like maggots to corruption. Howitt, in his “History of Priestcraft,” has truly said, that “Kingcraft and priestcraft have been the curse of the world. Taking advantage of human necessities—civil government and spiritual instruction—these two evil principles have become the scourges of our race. Kingcraft seizing hold upon the office of civil government, has proclaimed that the office was not made for man, but man for it—that it possessed a divine right to trample upon men’s dearest rights, to shed their blood at its will—and, in return, to be worshipped as a god. Its annals are written in blood—it has converted the earth into a hell, and men into demons. It has turned the human mind from its natural pursuit of knowledge, virtue, and happiness, into a career of blind rage and bitter prejudices. So much for kingcraft.” This charge is not stronger than the proofs that can be adduced would warrant—the pages of history, alas! abundantly confirm what is there stated—nay, the present state of society more than proves it. Republicanism, on the other hand, is based upon justice, on the will of the people—on the happiness of mankind, their interests, their intelligence, and their glory. It has no armour save honesty, no shield but virtue. It elevates where monarchy levels—it shines where monarchy lours—it flourishes where monarchy dies. Republicanism is no denizen of darkness or of feudalism. It exists only in the noon-day of civilisation—and amidst “the flow of reason, and

the gush of soul.” We need not refer to ancient history in support of this truth—man’s notions of the true objects of society are more expansive now than they ever were—and America, the first republic of the world, destined soon to be the first nation of the earth, rises like a colossal figure, above the crumbling embers of departing monarchical power.

“Look back to her origin, trace over her rapid and brilliant, her short, and yet glorious career, from the first moment that the forest began to fall beneath the sturdy arms of her children, and the prairie began to smile with a bright verdure and with new fruits, until the present moment, when the changes of civilised improvement have marked out a vast area on her continent, have crowded her mighty rivers with steamboats, have filled her harbours with shipping, have swelled villages into towns, and towns into cities, and which have, above all things, filled the cottage with plenty, and the hearts of her people with joy and contentment. Then, having contemplated all these things, ask, in astonishment and awe, the reason of all those gigantic improvements? It is easily given. The rights of labour, the *will* of labour, the basis of the government, and the protection and benefit of the whole people, are the ends aimed at by her laws.”

Contrast this with our monarchical institutions, behold our miserable huts, our deserted villages, our wretched cities, the abode of a miserable, half-fed, half-clad people, institutions which repress instead of encourage the ingenuity of man—which crush his spirit and lash him into obedience—which creates war to murder him, and pompous marches to dazzle him—stripping his cottage, stealing his food, robbing his wife, and starving his children—on purpose to place glittering toys on the brow of some harlot—give pensions to others, and ribbons and medals to their keepers. Working-men, reflect on these things, surely they want but little reflection. Keep the examples of a Washington, a Franklin, a Paine, a Jefferson, before your eyes—all working men, too! Yes, from such men as these has the great, flourishing, and powerful republic of America sprung—from which tyrants shrink in horror and dismay. But the good, the liberty-loving, behold with pride and hope. Let our working-men imitate the working-men of America—the example is good—the model high—the task may appear difficult, but it is attainable. Get knowledge, and with all your getting, get understanding. A little learning may be a dangerous thing for your oppressors, but not for you. Drop all nonsensical appeals to gods or governments—up from your knees—depend on yourselves for your liber-

ties. If you depend on the justice of parliament, or the goodness of god, you lean on broken reeds, and deserve your fate. Gods and governments never yet cared for workers. History shows that the people were never aught but the slaves of the despotic few—they were always systematically doomed to a life of toil or combat, so long as they left their affairs in the hands of others, and did not, like Æsop's waggoner, put their own shoulders to the wheel. In ancient, as in modern times, the aristocratic butchers led them forth in thousands to slay and be slain. What was, or is the value of human life to those excrescences of humanity, yclept monarchs and aristocrats? Not worth a moment's consideration—and yet we admire these human devils, treat them with respect, erect monuments, mausoleums, and give power and riches to demons, who have converted the earth into a howling wilderness.

Meantime, working-men, mix yourselves up with all that is going on in the nation, read and study every thing political and theological—let knowledge no longer be a “spring shut up or a fountain sealed.” Taste it, be not afraid. Associate together as much as you can, speak out to each other your thoughts, never be timid when your own and others liberty is at stake, and all depends on the energy of individual exertion. Want is making sad inroads on the producers—struggles will be made by those who are dying—artillery and bayonets will be presented to the breasts of our gaunt-faced, famished, stricken brethren—and he whose blood is not turned into milk, should be prepared not only to preserve the innocent, but destroy the wicked. “Make the ruling few uneasy,” has been the advice of some who wished well to their country, and it is good—for never was, nor never will there be any amelioration, but on that principle—the more extended, of course the greater the benefit. Therefore work patiently, resolutely, and honestly, and our purpose may be speedily accomplished. T. P.

PROPHECIES.

II.

The following account of the execution of Edward Rees, at Monmouth, on Monday, the 24th of April, 1843, for the murder of Mary Moxley, is copied from the *Weekly Dispatch*, of the 30th of April—“At 11 o'clock the culprit partook of the sacrament, when he acknowledged the justice of his sentence. He was then pinioned, and conducted to the scaffold, on his way to which he shook hands with the few people assembled in the gaol, saying, good bye, *god bless you ; I shall soon be in glory.* He passed through the lodge, and ascended the stairs leading to the roof, where the drop was constructed, and stepped lightly on the scaffold. When the rope was adjusted, he addressed the

multitude at great length, urging them to take warning by his fate, and to shun evil company. He then again shook hands with the governor of the gaol and the executioner. The cap was pulled over his face, and as he heard the bolt withdrawn, *he made a grasp at the rope with both hands, which the executioner was obliged to remove.*

ATHEISTS when they commit crimes, know that they will be punished for them in this world, and have no fear of further punishment hereafter—but least of all do they imagine, that when an end is put to their existence their vices will be a passport for them to another and a better world. Christians, on the contrary, know that for horrid crimes they will be made much of here, and they believe will be glorified hereafter. The christians, however, have had the unspeakable advantage over atheists, of having a felon-god constantly before their eyes for an example—a being who took the sins of all the world upon himself, besides his own share.

If the commencement of the career of the murderer executed at Monmouth was anything like the latter part, it was probably prophesied of him in his youth, according to the proverbial warning of affectionate friends and relations, that he would come to the gallows. Jesus did not leave it to others to foretell his death, but, in regular Jack Shepherd-style, having an instinctive knowledge of his own end, foretold it of himself, and that his future greatness would be the result. He says, “And I, *if I be lifted up* from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.” But, on another occasion, when Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, this popular felon made the same boasting allusion to his fate, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man be lifted up.” But he foretold how they would know him when he was hanged, and we not only know him, but every criminal who undergoes the extremity of the law, knows him likewise to be of the father. “Then said Jesus unto them, *When ye have lift up* the son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my father has taught me, I speak these things.” We can suppose that he was very well pleased when he turned out a true prophet. Pilate said unto the Jews, “Take ye him and judge him according to your laws. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death. *That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled*, which he spoke, signifying what death he should die.” It must have been very gratifying to Jesus to find himself right in this important particular, and that he would not go out of the world until he had fulfilled every trifle he might have said of himself, or what had been said of *any one else* in the scriptures.

How like a Jew he took care of his old clothes, and had a regular rag-fair under his

nose, that all might be fulfilled about them which had been prophecied by the god of the dealers in such merchandise. That he was a chip of the old block, the real son of his father, and no mistake, the only-begotten of the "clow, clows," we may judge, from the fact of the care he took of the clothes that had wrapped up his dead body—"Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie; and the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself." I do not suppose Jesus guilty of any felonious intention, or that he had put them up to take to his father, and show him what a bargain he had made—that though the soldiers had divided his old clothes, he had gone off with some of the best linen belonging to the rich Joseph of Arimathea.

It is the case with all theology, if you get out of one mess you get into another, from the frying-pan into the fire—it shocks my modesty, but the whole transaction smells of *crim. con.* Without any covering, he must have appeared stark naked to poor Mary—this, from her former profession, she must have been used to—and we see therein the sagacity of her lord in making her the chosen vessel of such an exhibition. But the rub is, "that when it was yet dark" Mary had been to the sepulchre by herself. The wrapt up clothes that Peter then found give a very suspicious appearance to the whole affair. The napkin, an inconvenient head-dress for a living man, was stowed away in a corner, while Peter "seeth the linen clothes lie," like a couch for Æneas and Dido. Mary sticks close to the place, and allows afterwards she had seen and spoken to him—she must then have seen him naked, or else he had returned and put on his clothes. Her story encourages the former alternative, when she says she did not look at him at first, or know him, which perhaps it might have been difficult to have done. "She turned herself," when instead of being called "woman," she heard the sweet familiar name of "Mary," and aware of what was expected of her, she said he cried out at the moment, "touch me not." This secret visiting looked very much as though Jesus, having been comforted to one Mary when he came into the world, was comforter to another Mary when he went out of it.

A virgin, a wife, and a sister, with some other half-dozen women who ministered unto him, were among the gallantries of this immortal Jack Shepherd, who, prince of Lovelaces, came expressly to repeal the commandment, "thou shalt not commit adultery." His admirers have given him a genealogy, where they have assembled some of the greatest royal rascals, male and female, scripture heroes and heroines, murder-

ers, robbers, and adulterers that are to be found in the old Jew-book. But without mentioning names, he gave his own genealogy in a few words, "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers." He always spoke of his own generation as adulterous, and his countrymen, the Jews, as the children of the devil, who was a liar and a murderer—like father like son.

He who was 'perfect in all villany, in matter of fact and speech, in the past and in the present—who, that the scripture might be fulfilled, when he came into the world, had all the innocents killed from Bethlehem to the sea coasts—who transgressed all the laws of the Jews and Romans—who, in his own style, pierced the heart of his mother with a sword—who, a prisoner at the bar, was ever shuffling between guilty and not guilty—who made a merit of deserving for the worst of crimes the worst of punishments—who set at defiance god and man, then humbled himself to the one, and roared out for help to the other—and would not speak the epilogue, "it is finished," and allow the curtain to fall over the bloody farce he had been enacting, until he had "received the vinegar"—he, I say, was a good prototype of convicted felons, and of our murderer of Monmouth. Our culprit, before going out of the world, took the sacrament—as did Jesus. He acknowledged the justice of his sentence—as Jesus did, who had been kept in the condemned cell from the foundation of the world, in order to be brought out for execution and satisfy his father's sense of justice. Our murderer was pinioned and conducted to the scaffold—our omniscient felon foresaw that the cross would be laid aside, as he had made it a wooden pavement to glory, he therefore came expressly up from the shades below, or down from heaven above, to let Peter and all other rascals, our murderer included, know what would be their fate: "Thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spoke he, signifying by what death he should glorify god." Like his lord and master, our murderer was rather fidgetty going to the gallows—speechifying and shaking hands—Jesus was going backwards and forwards to his disciples, praying and returning, evidently always putting a good face upon it, though he did not quite like it, and he said to Judas, "What thou doest do quickly," have it over, as our murderer is represented as stepping lightly upon the scaffold. He good-byes, shakes hands, and god-blesses them all, which was rather out-doing Jesus, as the divine felon is only represented as once saying, "Father forgive them all, for they know not what they do." Instead of a blessing, he more commonly cursed, and gave to the Jews pictures of their future woes, here and

hereafter, as matter for reflection when he should leave them. However, our murderer was quite orthodox in the assurance of his own glory—Jesus uses very much the same words whenever he spoke of his own death. He said to his disciples, “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world....and lifting up his eyes to heaven, Father the hour is come, glorify thy son, that thy son also may glorify thee.” We have no doubt our murderer thought he would be a great addition to the family party, and that he would make one of them in glorifying each other—or, as it is called here below, back-scratching each other.

W. J. B.

THEORY OF REGULAR GRADATION.

XXXIV.

(Mammalia continued.)

SOME of the animals composing this class are destined to move like fishes through a watery element, some to fly through the air like the feathered tribe, some to climb trees, some to dig and burrow in the earth, and others to walk upon its surface. Habits so diversified bespeak corresponding diversities of muscular arrangement. Many approximations to the human type present themselves on the one hand, and indisputable recurrences of simpler forms on the other. The fleshy portions of the muscles are generally large and plump, proportioned to the size of the body, or the massive bones of the skeleton. The respiration being here less extensive, and the circulation more slow, than in birds, the temperature is lower, the muscular fibre less dense, and the tendons less prone to undergo ossific changes. The glutæus maximus, forming the buttocks, which is the largest muscle of the human body, is small and feeble in the simiæ and other animals, its chief use being to support the trunk upon the lower extremity, and thus assist in maintaining the erect attitude, and not, as the pious pigelius imagined, to form a soft cushion for the body to rest on during divine cogitation. The extensors of the knee, the flexors of the toes, and the other muscles forming the calf of the leg, are relatively larger in the human subject than in any other animal.

To sum up, muscular fibres have been satisfactorily shown to exist in the higher species of the radiata. Muscle is found all through the articulate and molluscous classes, but better and more uniformly developed in the former. The soft parts are uniformly placed external to the hard, in the vertebrated classes. The muscles in fishes are generally soft and pale, as in the lower classes. In the amphibia, the muscles present different characters in the tadpole and adult state. Great variety in the reptiles, chiefly refer-

rible to their diversified habits. The muscular system in birds is characterised by great uniformity throughout the class. The muscles of the aquatic mammalia resemble those of fishes. Man is characterised by the magnitude of his buttocks, thighs, and calves.

The organs of smell in the mammalia are distinguished by the more perfect formation of external nose, by the large size of the nasal cavities, and by the latter receiving several new openings. The external openings are valvular in the beavers, seals, and camels, and variously modified in other animals, according to their different habits, as in the hog, elephant, &c. The large olfactory nerves pass through the numerous openings of the cribriform plate, except in the cetacea, to be distributed on the surface of the turbinated bones. These nerves are large and hollow in the human foetus, like the olfactory tubercles of quadrupeds, and it is interesting to observe how the sense of smell preponderates over all others in the new-born child, this can be easily tested during the nuzzling of the infant at the mother's breast, when the loudest sounds may assail its ears without effect, and when its visual powers are limited to the mere preception of intense light.

In the mammalia, generally, the organ of hearing is distinguished by the development of a true cochlea; by an increased number of auditory bones; by the formation of external canal, and by the addition of an external moveable ear. We will meet, however, with evident though gradual, transitions from the simple state of this organ already seen in the inferior classes, up to man, where it has attained its most complex and perfect condition. The concha is very small in otariæ, beavers, and otters, and wholly absent in the cetacea, seals, walruses, the mole, the manis, and the ornithorhynchus. The aquatic shrew and other mammalia which frequently go into the water, form an approach to the crocodile in having the external auditory opening furnished with a valve. This external orifice in the dolphin is merely large enough to admit a pin, and from it a long, narrow, winding passage leads to the tympanum through the fat which lies under the skin. As we ascend through the mammalia, residing more exclusively on the land, the concha acquires greater size, and by the development of cartilage and powerful muscles it becomes to enjoy very free and varied motions. It is large, moveable, and directed backwards in the ruminantia, pachydermata, cheiroptera, and especially in the timid and feeble rodentia; and in the carnivora it is small and inclined forwards. *The London Medical and Surgical Journal* gives the following extraordinary power of the human ear: The atmosphere is

the grand medium by which sound is conveyed, though recent discoveries prove that other bodies conduct it with greater expedition, as in the instance of vibrating the tuning fork, to the stem of which is attached a packthread, and the other end being wrapt round the little finger and placed in the chamber of the ear, the sound will be audibly conveyed to the distance of 200 yards, though not perceptible to any bystander. Miners in boring for coal can tell by the sound what substance they are penetrating—and a recent discovery is that of applying a listening-tube to the breast to detect the motions of the heart. The quickness which some persons possess in distinguishing the smaller sounds is very remarkable. A friend of the writer has declared that he could readily perceive the motion of a flea when on his night-cap, by the sound emitted by the machinery of his leaping powers. However extraordinary this may appear, we find a similar statement is given in the ingenious work upon insects by Kirby and Spence, who say, "I know of no other insect, the tread of which is accompanied by sound except, indeed, the flea, whose steps a lady assured me she always hears when it passes over her night-cap, and that it clacks as if it were walking in pattens!" If we can suppose the ear to be alive to such delicate vibrations, certainly there is nothing in the way of sound too difficult for it to achieve.

The digestive organs vary more in this than in any other of the vertebrated classes, and the varieties will be found to refer chiefly to the type of development and living habits of the sundry species. The teeth present infinite varieties as to form and position; however, their density and fixedness are well calculated to disintegrate alimentary substances, and blend them with the mucous and salivary secretions. The teeth are wanting in the ant-eaters, pangolins, and the whalebone whale. The young ornithorhynchus paradoxus has two molar teeth in each jaw on each side; these are shed in the adult animal, and replaced by one large one on each side. But in the hystrix there are twenty small, blunt, horny teeth, near the base of the tongue, and seven transverse rows in the corresponding surface of the palate. The incisor, canine, and molar teeth exist in the quadrumana, carnivora, ruminantia, without horns, and in most of the pachydermata; but it is only in the extinct anoplotherium among mammalia, that the three kinds of teeth are arranged in an uninterrupted series, as in man. The superior incisors are wanting in the ruminantia, and the inferior in the walrus. The Ethiopian hog and certain bats lose their incisors at a particular age. The canine teeth are absent in the rodentia, some ruminants, and in most of the female solipeda. The

rodentia have but two incisors in each jaw, with the exception of the hare and rabbit, which have them double in the upper jaw; the kangaroo has two below and eight above; the damon two above and four below. The molar teeth are the most essential, and are the last to disappear: hence the ornithorhynchus paradoxus, the tatu, and the two-horned rhinoceros, are restricted to them. The molar teeth are renewed eight times in the elephant, the incisors are shed twice in many rodentia; and most of the teeth are renewed once in the other orders of the mammalia. In most mammalia which feed on animal substances, the crowns of the teeth are entirely covered with enamel, and only partially so in the phytophagous quadaupeds.

The purposes of prehension, or laying hold of objects, are accomplished by sensitive fleshy lips, as in herbivorous quadrupeds, by a long, flexible tongue, as in the giraffe and ant-eaters, and by other organs such as the proboscis of the elephant. The salivary glands are largest in herbivorous quadrupeds, less in the carnivora, and least in the aquatic mammalia.

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M. RYALL, Sec.

ERRATUM.—In p. 167, the 24th line from top of first column, for "moral doctrines of the unitarians," read "Essenes."

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[PRICE 1D.]

**THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE
JUDGMENT.**

**THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF SUSSEX,
AND THE ROYAL BIRTH.**

THE right of private judgment, which was asserted by everybody who had the power to exercise it at the Reformation, has never arrived to a fulfilment of the meaning of the term—has never become a principle with any party. The right of private judgment, is with everybody what *I* think and choose to express, not what *you* think and choose to express. So far, taken in that sense, indeed, the right of private judgment is as jealously preserved as the right of private property, the monopoly of a company, or an individual—a patent which no one must infringe. Thus we have seen lately the dissenters asserted the right of private judgment, until they obtained it for themselves. Liberty was given to them to express their opinions, and in whatever way they chose. No sooner were they admitted to a free trade in thought and utterance, than they as resolutely defended the monopoly as those who had formerly possessed it had done against them. Not only is this observable in law and government, but it extends to society—a newspaper must be written as closely as possible within the circle of opinions of a certain set. The extension of a principle, a variation from these prescribed limits, let it be of the slightest nature, and it offends all those who come closely up to it. None, perhaps, have so jealously to watch over any advance as the liberal journals—their subscribers have stretched the right of private judgment to its farthest extension in their own opinions, and one step farther places the whole of their own party, and all the opinions they have hitherto gone with, out of the pale.

Thus, in the history of religious and political progress, and thus constantly before our eyes, we see those who have separated from former friends who have gone in advance of them, suffer a violent reaction, and become more opposed to progress than its consistent enemies. The object of the *Oracle of Reason* was to assert the real principle involved in the right of private judgment. The right of

expression was to be the same to us as to all, what is fair to one was to be fair to all, what is a right line in one was not to be crooked in another, equal was to be as good a share to one as to another, and just was to be the same measure to all—and if we did not say, do as you would be done unto, it was always declaration of our right to do as you do—in matters of expression, if not in fact—and in opinion, as in trade, reciprocity was our cry.

Every one of the writers in the *Oracle* is morally responsible for what he inserts, and he answers for it individually by putting his initials to his articles. One takes the legal responsibility of the whole upon himself, but there is no one absolute in this republic of letters. Readers, therefore, who object to passages in the *Oracle of Reason*, must bear in mind the person who speaks to them, and recollect there are as many shades of opinions in individuals as there are differences in style, and that all are united in one common purpose of acting up to, and others in supporting the right of, saying what we like.

According to the theory of our beautiful constitution, the monarchical principle not only can do no wrong, but may say what it likes, and speaks for everybody. Thus, in the person of our present sovereign, it has spoken the opposite sentiments of two parties in the state—whigs & tories. The queen, according to the law, is the judge, prosecutor, and executioner, and fills our prisons with the victims of blasphemy prosecutions. This freedom of speech is all granted to one individual, but woe to the offender amongst the people, who thinks, from his class, he may say what he likes of those above him. The upper classes may say what they like of all those below them, but let the people begin with those immediately above them and rise in the scale, their danger increases at every step—and when they reach the highest personage in the realm, they may esteem themselves lucky if they are not found guilty, and hanged for high treason. The sympathies of the public are all the same. France is to weep for the shocking end of the heir presumptive—and the death of a member of our royal family, if not a subject of real grief or interest, is to be made one, by distressing some and giving ceremonies to others. We are, on the other hand, to fall into raptures of joy at the ascension to a

throne, a coronation, a marriage, a birth, all which not only involves us in additional items of expense, but perpetuates the whole system. Thus we are induced to minimise and not maximise the virtues, and to contract all the sensibilities of the heart—it is not the happiness of the greatest number, but of the fewest possible, which is to command our undivided attention and affection. That this is the fact we see—for while a nation will weep that a princess died in child-birth, a hell of misery developed in mines under-ground, will be a subject of passing amusement, then of indifference, and will end in a denial of food to mind and body. Our sympathies exalted to the highest pitch on earth, the translation is still easier to the incomprehensibilities of heaven—and if the bodies of all are for the few in this world, the salvation of souls—that is, the mind saturated with religion for the next—is to be considered the only acceptable service to god. Now, our sensations extend to all animated nature, coming from matter and going to matter, matter reforming, we have a common property in matter, which might metaphysically give us a tender regard for all creation. This is apart from the sensations we share here in common with all other beings, for unless our minds are hardened by privation, or constantly having them lifted up above all lower susceptibilities, we feel the wrongs of man and animals.

The apparent properties of matter are also apart from the love we have to all, and the wish to live at peace with all, and the interchange of mutual kindnesses. One of us has been found fault with for satirising this current propensity of society which we have pointed out. He has been a sufferer in person under this system, and therefore it is his opinion the sooner it is removed without respect to persons the better. He was not with individuals, but, as he says, with “the genus” of evil, which must be allowed to be bad, though some of the race may have been better than others. But he does not mean even the genus particular of these isles, but the monarchical *principle*. He is in favour of a more republican system in church and state, opinions, persons, and things. When one incubus is removed, he does not wish to see another in its place, though those who profit by it may wish to see the system and the principle always “doing well.” Though we wage war with Mary and her son, as religious principles, we have no animosity against that virgin and her child, or any other mother and her infant—we wish them all well. Though we ridicule a crucified felon, as an object of worship, we are against all capital punishments. Though averse to the monarchical principle, we could lament the death of Mary Queen of Scots, executed

by another of the genus, who was of her own sex, but royal and religious in another way, and we even feel for the unhappy Charles, on the scaffold, an infidel to truth and true to piety, who was sacrificed by the puritanical bloodhounds of the other party. The mind though, however it may be fixed upon some miseries, should have a feeling for all—these are but tragedies enacted on a great stage, when those much more worthy of our sympathies are the every-day scenes of life.

I may not understand correctly two paragraphs on public events—the obituary and the royal birth—which appeared in the *Oracle*, but the above was my interpretation of the language used on those occasions, and so far I sympathised with the writer. Style cannot be quarrelled with, and if the thoughts were other than those suggested to some minds, it would be interfering with the right of private judgment to endeavour to restrict the utterance of them. For his acts the writer will have to answer, but let his opinions be tested, however obnoxious—the truth will never be arrived at by not hearing them—truth seeming to be with those who point, in however startling a way, to the real nature of things, when all the world have forgotten principles, in persons, and in a general tone of sentimentality. Much more does truth seem to be with those who shock prejudices by most unseasonable opposition, and naked sentiments of a contrary opinion, than with those who, otherwise thinking the same, are so overpowered by the prevailing sentiments of the day, that they are actually shocked at their own shadows, though they only see their own impressions going before them.

W. J. B.

THE DUKE OF SUSSEX.—It has not been remarked by the newspapers, that the Rev. Mr. Woods, the chaplain of the queen dowager, was sent up by her to attend the last moments of the late Duke of Sussex. After having made his inquiries, he returned as he came. There was no other clergyman called in. On the occasion of the deaths of other royal personages, we have their last dying speeches and confessions published by some reverend, looking out for preferment. On the principle of the greater sinner the greater saint, these royalties make up for the disadvantages of wealth, by making their sins turn the scale of heaven again in their favour. The press try to keep silence as to the duke's infidelity, lest the force of example may give offence to the little ones in Christ. We know it without their instruction. If man be the creature of circumstances, it must be admitted that, surrounded by the worst, they did not make the duke so bad as the other men and women of his family.

ANATOMY OF HETERODOXIES,

SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF THE "ORACLE."

THE "BINDING PRINCIPLE,"
AS STATED BY "THE DEIST," FURTHER
CONSIDERED AND CONCLUDED.

THE following, in continuation of the review of the *Deist's* "binding" notions, I have just found among some loose papers, which had been before overlooked. As they further illustrate and complete the subject, they may still be worth the printing.

In the last paper, styled the "Anatomy of Heterodoxies," in the 68th No. of the *Oracle*, the assumption of superiority in behalf the so-called binding principle, said to be characteristic of religion in general, was noticed. It was stated, that whatever of good in the binding way is discoverable in religion, was equally a portion of every associative plan or system, moral, political, or social. Further, that the term principle was misapplied here in relation to religion, being properly applicable to the exact sciences, philosophy, or morals, but not to a speculation, or a system based on speculation.

In conclusion, the binding theological, and the binding non-theological, are analytically, though briefly, considered. If I enter more fully into deistical objections than their importance might seem to warrant, my anxiety that this periodical shall never incur the reproach of unfairness in dealing with the opinions of others, must plead my excuse.

The binding power is asserted to be the most valuable part of religion, and that which especially distinguishes religious from other systems. I will not dispute that that which is binding in religion is the most valuable part of religion. But the most valuable part of religion may be very worthless after all. Perhaps the least pernicious would have been the more accurate expression. The contaminating influence of religion may mar what is otherwise good and useful in the binding power. To say that the binding together specially distinguishes religious from all other systems, is untrue—for religion is but one out of numerous systems, political, social, economic, moral, patriotic, &c., which have a strong binding action. All that might be conceded—and with qualification—is, that the binding tie of religion might be the strongest tie of any. The same may be said of the stimulus induced by competition. The competitive may be the strongest stimulus. It neither proves the superiority of religion, nor competition, to say that one produces the strongest binding

tie, the other the strongest stimulus. The strongest may be the worst in both cases. We may go further and say, that any drawing or binding together of individuals which is more powerful and effectual than that which improved social, political, or moral science can effect, is injurious instead of beneficial. A case in point is presented by a correspondent in the *Deist*, who signs himself D. F. He writes from a Shaker community, of which he is a member, and strongly urges the superiority of their condition, and the stability of the institution. The binding power, with the belief in, fear of, and influence by, a supreme providence, is mainly insisted on as a chief element in their maintaining their community arrangements. He says, no external circumstances can produce a superior moving principle. "It requires a power to do that which you have not among you, and the existence of which you question. It is that power which said, 'I kill and make alive again.' If you understood fully, and had a corresponding feeling, of what man is, what human nature is capable of, and what it is not capable of being, the very existence of our communities (of which there are nearly twenty) in such stability and order, with such a solid harmony and peace resting on them, would be proof to you that there is a god—and that same knowledge would show you that man of himself is not able to live in community." On this, I would remark, that if the religious or binding tie had sufficient strength to induce these communists to live in the anti-natural condition of sexual non-intercourse, and other miserably superstitious and degrading states which are represented, it was a most pernicious exertion of strength. If it had a giant's strength, it used it like a giant. But I deny that these communists were thus bound together because of their religion—their society was held together in spite of its religion. It was maintained by its prosperity, and its prosperity was owing to superior individual habits of industry, and superior co-operative arrangements. With such conditions, what a harvest of happiness would be reaped by non-superstitious and intelligent people.

The *Deist* elsewhere attributes the belief in the god-existence to the *feelings* instead of the *intellect*. This, I think, is the best guess yet made. "Upon reflection, it will be found that the difference of opinion, deism *v.* atheism, has its root in the feelings and not in the understanding. 'The wish is father to the thought.'" A very philosophical basis, truly! yet, I think equally so with the tie notion. The deist wishes for a tie or binding principle. He gets it into his head that we have not one strong enough for his purpose in any proposed system, eco-

monic, moral, political, social, or commercial. He further fancies that he has discovered the right sort of tie, in religion or god-belief, an indissoluble tie, tighter than a marriage tie, a true lover's knot, or the hangman's noose. Finding that nothing natural will answer to his grand conceptions, he forthwith invents, or takes for granted on other people's invention, a supernatural or unnatural existence. He then, with might and main ties fast the gordian knot of god-dism, which has puzzled everybody to untie, many to cut through, and with which we summarily deal by cutting off altogether. "The wish is father to the thought," quoth the natural theologian. There doubtless are fathers and mothers for all the monstrous progeny of gods and creeds, as well as of men. I say that hope is the father and fear the mother of gods, engendering all varieties of monstrous births. The sooner our common humanity is rescued from the inflictions of such direful conceptions, the sooner will poor human nature be emancipated from its crushing burden of errors and evils.

M. Q. R.

LANGUAGE OF GERMAN DEMOCRACY.
—"Tear up the cross from the earth, and make swords of it. Let the sword be sharpened upon the anvil. Let the scimitar be our saviour. Aim it at the hearts of tyrants and cowardly slaves. The sword has its high-priest, and we will be its apostles. Let us seize the faithful weapon, and hold it until our hands wither! We have loved—now we will hate. Let him who now feels his heart beat, devote it to hatred—we shall find everywhere a sufficiency of wood to illumine the funeral pyre. Sing through the streets of Germany, 'We have loved, and now we will hate!' Fight without intermission the despots of the earth, and our hatred shall become more sacred than our love. Let us keep—let us keep the sword until our hands grow dry! We will support no longer the accursed yoke of god; we will not tolerate the bloody knout of Russia. We will not tolerate those declamatory sovereigns who deny to-day all that they promised yesterday. We will not submit to those regents of divine right who adopt god as their guide: we will not have these poet-kings, who make verses upon freedom, and trample the rights of the public press under foot. We will not receive those tyrants who come to us from England. Let every nation retain its wealth and its shame. We will not submit to those princes who trample upon us; let the devil take them, and we will pray for them!"

It is the great failing of a strong imagination to catch greedily at wonders.—*Johnson.*

A SKIRMISH BETWEEN A GODLY AND AN UNGODLY.

IN about forty forms has been paraded the following specimen of godly wit. A juvenile believer is asked, by an infidel, if he can tell where god is—and the never-to-be-sufficiently-admired young saint replies—"Can you tell me where he is not?" The infidel is duly confuted, and the lucky hit is treasured up for future use. The following dialogue exhibits an instance of its recent employment.

GODLY.—It can only be from wilful blindness that you do not believe in a god. It is only the "*fool* who hath said in his heart that there is no god." All nature says there is a god, and all men must believe it.

UNGODLY.—Pray, sir, where is your notable god, whose existence you so dogmatically affirm, and for whom you demand such unqualified belief?

G.—(Looking very "cute.")—Pray, sir, can you tell me where he is not?

U.—He is not in your hat—(Handing him his "four-and-nine" for inspection. Godly looked "quite shocked." Nothing shocks a christian like confuting him. But recovering a little, the dialogue proceeded.)

G.—But he *is* everywhere, and he must be there.

U.—Here, look again, can you see, or hear, or feel him?

G.—What absurdity! You know we cannot find out god by the senses, but I know he is there.

U.—And I know he is not, and my "know he is not," is worth more than your "know he is," because appearances are in my favour. When the neumatist says that air is everywhere, he can take his air-pump and prove it. It would be well, sir, if so positive a person as yourself carried an instrument of this kind—or a little god-pump in your pocket.

G.—You have no right to expect a *proof* of his existence.

U.—Then you have no right to *assert* it. If you go about making dogmatical assertions, you must expect dogmatical objections. Never raise, through conceit, expectations which you cannot satisfy. I do not yield my belief to every theological coxcomb who may choose to demand it. Belief is man's second-best guide, and should not be lightly esteemed. My faith I weigh out in troy scales, and never exchange it but for the pure gold of sense. I give so much belief only for so much reason, and if you expect the purchase you must pay the price. If you content yourself with saying that you have very good reasons for thinking that there is a god, I should make no objections, but proceed to say that I believe I have very good reasons for thinking differently—but

when you, or any other christian, talks of a god's existence as a self-evident proposition, it is but natural and it is but fair to require self-evident proofs. G. J. H.

CHRISTIAN LYING, *alias* METHODIST IMPUDENCE.

I SEND the following extracts to you for insertion, from a tract lately circulated by the methodist tract distributors, because I think that religious folly should be fully exposed, and that we should show the religious world that we not only allow each party to tell its own tale, but encourage each to do so, that the truth may be sought, found, and appreciated. The man who could write such trash, and those who could circulate it after it was written, must indeed be deficient of common sense, much more so than the very worst infidel picture drawn in the tract. If infidelity is founded on such slender grounds as are stated in the tract, christians cannot be very firm in the faith, or they would not fear it so much as they do—if it is so weak as they represent, they have nothing to fear:

"No sensible man ever became an infidel from conviction. *One* pretends to disbelieve from vanity, because he thinks it distinguishes him as an original thinker—*another*, from weakness, because he has not sufficient intellect to resist the sceptics' arguments, shallow as they are—a *third*, because he considers it an easy way of getting into notice—a *fourth*, because Voltaire, Hume, Gibbon, and others of the same character, were sceptics, and he blusters about with their arguments, strutting and exclaiming, 'what a dust we raise.'

"Men of common sense who call themselves infidels, are hypocrites, others who assume the same character, are simply fools—the latter should be pitied, the former spurned."

Christians think it a very horrible thing to swear, but to lying, practically speaking, they have no objection. Now, although I think swearing a very useless, vulgar habit, I would much prefer a swearer to a liar, for a companion—in the former you may place some confidence, in the latter none whatever. The writer of the tract no doubt approves of the saying of the fanatic Paul:

"If the truth of god abound through my lie unto his glory, why should I be accounted a sinner?"

I suppose he thought that the blood of Christ would prevent him from being sent, as a liar, to the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. AN EX-SOCIAL MISSIONARY.

"Till we learn to quiet our minds, and to school them into submission to god, we shall probably find more perplexity than information even in what St. Paul calls 'the light of the glorious gospel of Christ.' (Newman, sermon vii.)

COMMON SENSE.

THE old maxim—certainly a safe one—"that in the country of the one-eyed we should become one-eyed," may be strained too far for really honest purposes; and surely it would be a gross misapplication of this, in some cases, sound and useful rule of practice, for men of sense and spirit always to be content to put on the livery of fools, or fasten to their shoulders an artificial hump, lest their straightness should offend the envious eyes of their neighbours.

We write not as partisans, but men—not the promoters of one scheme of reform merely, but reform of every kind—local or general, national or individual; and as truth is in its very nature universally applicable, by publishing *that*, and as far as we comprehend it, *that* alone, all, no matter what their class or party, may be benefitted. *Truth* is the basis of all excellence—this is the fundamental axiom of the wisest in all nations; but, alas! how little do human practices harmonise with it!

Doctor Southwood Smith, in his "Philosophy of Health," when describing the effects of the discovery of the circulation of the blood, observes, "It is certain that there are moral truths to be discovered, expounded, and enforced, which, if any man had penetration enough to see them, and courage enough to express them, would cause him to be regarded by the present generation with horror and detestation." This is undoubtedly true; but were it not for such men as Harvey, the world would be given over to the dominion of fools, and knaves who prey upon them. The pioneers of the army of liberty should not be

Like ladies' gentlewomen,

but men prepared to do dangerous—aye, and it may be, unpleasant work; for pioneers, in removing obstructions, are not in the rear but the van—covered with sweat and dust, and exposed to the murderous fire of the enemy; but feather-bed soldiers do well enough to count the spoil when the field is won—not to bear the brunt of the battle.

The terms common sense are very significant—within reach of the humblest capacity—therefore we shall not attempt a *particular* definition, as it might be, that we should thereby run a tilt against logic and logicians, who teach that all definitions should be clearer than the thing defined; and though we do know, what to some may seem paradoxical, that common sense is a very rare species of sense, it is in high repute, though unlike other rare acquisitions, little sought after by rich or poor.

Lady Morgan, in her "Book Without a Name," notices the intimate connection between spare diet and dogged obstinacy.

Now, the strictest relationship between common sense and common honesty is no less certain, though it may not at first appear; but though men write and declare that honesty is the best policy, and agree that common sense is the best mover and supporter of the best policy, almost all men act as though they only speak, but do not feel. The inconsistency of the human mind, in admiring one course of conduct and practising another, arises from this, that interest prescribes one course and justice another. Even the clergy will agree with Seneca, that "right reason is the perfection of human nature, and wisdom only the dictate of it"—but there is hardly a clerical teacher in the country who does not throw obstacles in the way of the development of that reason, which he nevertheless agrees is, when rightly guided, "the perfection of human nature." So we find common sense lauded by all as a something so clearly valuable, that men should even pledge their garments to obtain it, supposing it purchasable; yet, while the possessor of money is envied by his neighbours, as one supremely blest, let a man have ever so much of common sense, very few of his neighbours will care to become the joint possessors of it. Common sense is that sense which enables men, as it were, instinctively to understand that a circle is not a square, nor a man a horse, however dexterously logicians may appear to prove that a man *is* a horse and a square *is* a circle. Common sense has its groundwork in the reason of things, which lie so open and exposed to human investigation, that an attempt to make them palpable and clear is the ridiculous employment of increasing a certainty, which surpasses the ingenuity of the man who industriously "showed the sun with a lanthorn."

A common sense view of things would lessen our surprise, that the members of the clerical profession are in general the enemies of education and public liberty—it is ill-informed people only who wonder to see them ready to shed tears of bitterness when they reflect how sacerdotal power has dwindled into little more than a mockery—contrasting what they were with what they are; and saying most pathetically—"look on this picture and on this!" It is idle to wonder that they should feel this, and long to be all-powerful rulers of the earth by the authority of heaven—and, like the priests of Meroe and Ethiopia, have the power of life and death over kings as well as subjects!

It is certainly much to be regretted that the teachers of religion have so small a stock of common sense, as it would mightily improve them. How unfortunate it is, for example, that they should not be less fidgetty than they usually are—why Banquo's ghost with "twenty thousand mortal murders on

his crown," was not more terrible to the soul-stricken Macbeth, than is freedom's shadow to our clerical teachers, whose unfortunate sensitiveness in this particular is to be deplored—for were they not the enemies of public liberty, they would deservedly reign in the hearts of the people—but they have preferred to be the well-favoured in the palaces of kings. Oh, how refreshing it would be to see start from their graves some of the early teachers of the christian faith, expounders of the moral law, when the church could make the honest boast—"Gold and silver have I none," and like a true mother, bless her stars that she could give to her children an inheritance of virtue!—how delightful to hear the preaching of men who, Tertullian informs us, "were at first not called christiani, but chrestiani, from the word importing sweetness of temper"—and adds, "that it was the great distinguishing character of the christians of old, given them by their professed enemies, *ecce ut christiani amant*—behold how these christians love one another." The cause of this degeneracy of the clergy is worth probing into, if we gain naught by it but a more intimate knowledge of the workings of the human mind, and the never-failing sources of its corruption—for the fact is beyond dispute, that the teachers of Christ's word in these times have but little in common with the apostles, or their immediate descendants, and are far, very far, from being the sweetest-natured people in the world.

A remark of Fontenelle occurs to us, which, though bitter, is but too true, that "If all religions were to be destroyed the professors of which do not love each other, all existing religions would be swept from the earth!" This is surely a scandal which cannot be much longer permitted; but unfortunately, the rulers of the people—civil and ecclesiastical—generally begin the work of reform at the wrong end. They worry the people, as ill-trained shepherds' dogs do sheep, by vexatious intermeddlings and severe penal laws—as though they supposed that human beings are only to be driven into honest paths as wild beasts are driven into the toils of the hunter. The oriental proverb says, "If you cannot take things by the head, seize them by the tail;" but the curious directors of human affairs have a way of their own, that they steadily and constantly pursue. Human nature, in all its essential features, is precisely the same to-day as it was before the flood, and no body of men have ever yet been known to part with power and influence, justly or unjustly acquired, without a desperate struggle; and we may be sure that the clergy of these realms now, as heretofore, will resist all encroachments upon their authority, whether that authority be good or evil in its influence upon the

country. The conduct of the clergy at the time of the reform agitation, and later still, when the paltry sum of £30,000 was voted for the education of the people of this great nation, and their opposition to the factories education bill, gave us a spice of their quality, and has left all but the most devout admirers without the slightest doubt as to what they would do, if they dare, to check education, and stifle human reason. They were

Fierce as ten furies—
Terrible as hell!

that the whigs should offend the majesty of the christian faith by bringing in a bill to remove certain disabilities from the Jewish people, and thereby establish the principle, that no difference of creed should justify the exclusion of any men or body of men from the enjoyment of political privileges, or the occupation of civil offices.

Common sense will destroy all *national* creeds, and men will then no more dream of setting up certain dogmas, based upon human imaginings, than they would set up a national astronomy, a national chemistry, or a national solution of mathematical problems. All creedism is partial in its influence, and local in its character—but truth alone is universal in its nature. Men differ as to the value of creeds, but there are no two opinions as to the value of good actions. Professors of faith may, though they seldom do, love each other; but no man can love hypocrisy—the hypocrite is always hated, because hypocrisy is the source and spring of countless evils to the human race. Of all human creeds, one only can be true, and all may be false—but who shall presumptuously decide as to the fitness or excellence of his neighbour's midnight, or even mid-day, speculations? The idea of a national creed, published by authority, is the *ne plus ultra* of human arrogance and stupidity.

The Persians have a proverb, "take not a house when the people in the lower quarter are ignorant and devout;" and really, ignorantly devout people are the most curious and dangerous specimens of humanity. But the Age of Reason has now commenced, and none can be insensible to the growing disposition of the people of the humblest and most numerous classes, to reason upon passing and past events, and inquire into the origin and usefulness of all institutions, customs, and opinions. The manifestation of this searching spirit is the grand distinguishing feature of the present moral movement. The people begin now to perceive that all social, political, and theological systems, being purely artificial, must sooner or later go the way of all systems—giving place to others more in harmony with the sum of intelligence at each epoch; for all art being but the right application of human experience, the art of go-

vernment, like all others, should be progressive, and having its foundations in human opinions, which are, from their very nature, shifting and variable, it must be equally so. The house, the foundations of which are imbedded in the solid rock, may stand; but no man, the plane of whose forehead did not incline to the horizon at the angle of idiocy, would seek a long lease for one built upon the sands. It is true that the old politico-theological house has stood for many centuries without any serious damage, but if opinions, which, be it remembered, give the law, were, before the era of printing, hard and impenetrable as granite, now they are in unceasing motion, like the waves of the sea, or the sand of an Arabian desert.

A man's theological opinions merely, as such, are not of great practical importance in the affairs of life, but the practices to which they give birth are undoubtedly of prime consequence; so that, though a state theology is an irresistibly ludicrous and harmless affair viewed abstractedly, and by the aid of a little common sense, yet it is not less certain, that it is a theological cement of admirable consistence, which holds together the bricks, stones, and framework of bad governments. If theology were to take a form angelic, and speak, she might say, "alone I do it!" for let the theological doctors be sneered at as they may be by statesmen, who would be glad enough to throw them aside as a cripple would his old crutch, could he march on without it, they are nevertheless indispensable auxiliaries in the work of bolstering up the old *regime*, by crying up good old faith, and crying down vile new reason. Besides, the church is exceedingly accomodating, and gives statesmen and kings *now*, whatever it did in former times, very little uneasiness or trouble; for being based upon what is called theology, and that being neither an art nor a science, comes not within the category of tangible things; but its plastic character enables it to assume all sorts of shapes. This we do know; and being regulated entirely by the law, it accomodates itself to the latter with surprising facility; and as we find that certain insects do assume the hue and colour of the vegetables upon which they feed, so do theological opinions take their tone and character, or, if we be permitted the expression, their hue and colour, from the government which supports them.

It is undoubtedly true, that the clergy have a mortal antipathy to knowledge, and are themselves the purest specimen of its worst effects; for, as though not struck in the common mould of humanity, they seem not moveable by common motives, nor at all affected by vulgar influences. It is a truth with which opticians have made us acquainted, that all bodies upon which light

is reflected become themselves luminous; a truth applying, we were going to say, universally in morals as well as in physics; but had we done so, we should have blundered sadly, for the clergy, high and low, are, to speak figuratively, as the centre of a circle of light, with as many angles of incidence as there are points in the circumference, but they—strange substances—receive no light! they stand wonderful exceptions, to the otherwise universal truth, that all bodies upon which light is reflected become themselves luminous. This may be matter of regret, but it is certainly matter of fact; but we trust it will be found that common sense, the *sensus communis* of the Romans, which signified not only common sense, as now narrowly interpreted, but also humanity and sensibility—is the basis of all the virtues, and the best moral *elixir vitæ* for both priests and people. C. S.

ENGLISH JUSTICE.

THE *Sun* of Monday Evening, April 24th, says that one preacher yesterday was committed by the police to a watch-house. Another, hearing of his companion's arrest, decamped. The commissioners of the woods and forests are determined to put down the repetition of the revolting and blasphemous discussions of last summer. The strong government is getting its hand into work. We have no doubt, one side only is silenced, that discussion may be fair, legitimate, impartial, and open. We should like to know under what law this person was arrested. We suppose the "Paterson metropolitan police clause," as decided by Jardine, has rendered this important service to the tory executive.

This idea of English justice is not confined to religion, but might be traced through all the injustice committed by us in the name of justice. Lady Sale, in her notes, says to the Affghans, "I will not defend the invasion of your country, but do not assassinate us, but meet us in fair fight." This is nothing more than asking them to be massacred *en masse*. The butchers might as well say it was a fair fight between them and the cattle in Smithfield-market. Sir Charles Napier has, with two thousand men, totally defeated twenty two thousand Beelochistans.

Fréville was a political economist, and translator of English works. He professed atheism in private society and in coffee-houses. He left some manuscripts upon this subject. This was one of his arguments: The object of an abstract intellectual idea does not exist. Now god is the object of an abstract intellectual idea: therefore god does not exist.

The opinions of Averroes, a Spanish-Arabian philosopher, who flourished in the eleventh century, were, as to religions—that christianity was absurd, judaism the religion of children, mahometanism the religion of swine. St. Paul in his epistles mentions the folly of christianity, and the childishness of judaism. It was fit that infancy and idiocy, Jew and gentile, being provided with faiths, that the hitherto excommunicated brutes, men made swine, should have their religion also. The averroists disbelieved the immortality of the soul, and were a sect in Italy before the reformation, or restoration of learning.

NOTICE.

RECEIVED.—G. Powell, Bristol, and Henry Sculthorp.

ERRATUM.—In No. 74, for Collector 97 ls. 3d., read 2s. 3d.

LIBRARY OF REASON.

ON Saturday, June 3, the proprietors of the *Oracle of Reason* will publish No. II. of their "Library of Reason," to be continued on the first Saturday of every month. The "Library of Reason," will consist of re-prints of rare and valuable works, which are either out of print or too expensive for the general reader. No. II. will contain

HUME'S ESSAY UPON

"LIBERTY AND NECESSITY,"

Forming part of his "Inquiry concerning Human Understanding."

The following are a few of the Authors whose leading works will appear in the pages of the "Library of Reason":

Epicurus	Bolingbroke	Weiland
Aristotle	Hume	Buffon
Lucretius	Gibbon	Julian Hibbert
Cicero	Burdon	Lalande
Bacon	Spinoza	Ensor
Hobbs	Strauss	Owen
Shaftesbury	Marechal	Bentham

In all cases, were practicable, each number will contain a *complete* essay, and in no case will any particular work extend over many numbers—this desirable object will be effected without abridgment, excepting where an abridgment would be an improvement, and then it will be executed with the greatest care. The majority of the numbers, as readers will perceive, being thus perfect in themselves, may be purchased separately—neither their beauty nor their utility being marred by isolation. As an illustration of the intentions of the proprietors, No. I. may be referred to, which contains the *whole* of PLUTARCHUS'S celebrated and admirable *Essay* on "Deisidaimonia," or "SUPERSTITION," with WYTTENBACH'S NOTE. Translated by the late lamented JULIAN HIBBERT, whose Notes are also given. A limited number of this work was printed by the translator at his private press, and has never before been reprinted. The original edition, which was sold for *one guinea*, is now given in the "Library of Reason," for *one penny*.

The "Library of Reason" will be of uniform size and appearance with the *Oracle of Reason*, and be published at the same price, namely, ONE PENNY per number, containing nearly double the usual quantity of information given for that sum by the Liberal or Infidel Press.—London: Hetherington.

Printed and Published by THOMAS PATERSON, No. 11, Bolt-court, Fleet-street, London.
Saturday, May 20, 1843.

THE ORACLE OF REASON:

Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE"

No. 76.]

EDITED BY "THE MAN PATERSON."

[PRICE 1D.]

THE RELIGIOUS CANT OF ANTI-CORN-LAWISM.

"REMEMBER, above all, that your decision will be *recorded on high*, and that you will be called to account for *your vote* at that dread tribunal, when all mankind will be judged."

The above paragraph is taken from a card that is now in course of presentation to the electors of the United Kingdom, by the Anti-Corn-Law League, by which it will be seen that that body do not scruple to use dishonest means to obtain an honest end—the establishment of free-trade. I say dishonest means, because no one but a fool can suppose that "gor-a-mity" will keep a number of clerks to note down the names of those who vote against repeal, or that he would do it himself, or ever remember it if he could—the idea is absurd. Let us, however, imagine the scene.

GOD.—In what century did you live, and where?

ELECTOR.—In the nineteenth, my lord, in the island of Great Britain.

G.—Let me see, that was about the time Peel passed his "sliding-scale" corn bill, was it not? Did you live before or after the passing of that act? If after, how did you vote?

E.—I thought it a good measure, and voted against its repeal.

G.—You did? You surely knew that my servants, the dissenting clergy, advised differently, when they met in congresses, and concluded that the corn laws ought to be repealed, because *their chapels were not so numerously and respectably attended as they used to be?*

E.—Yes, my lord, but I thought I had a right to please myself.

G.—It's my turn now to please myself, so I shall send you to hell, for not supporting the wise, just, and benevolent manufacturers of Great Britain, who did their utmost to prove the truth of scripture, that "the poor shall never cease out of the land."

Seriously, Mr. Editor, is it not quite disgusting to find men thus act the part of hypocrites, for the sake of turning religious prejudice to account, and perpetuate one evil while they are seeking the removal of another? That success will not attend

their exertions, if these are the means to be employed they may rest assured. The time is, in a great measure, gone by, for such paltry artifices to stand a chance of success. Taking even a christian view of the character of god, the idea of his interference is ridiculous in the extreme, for if he is offended at the enactment of the corn law, why did he not prevent it? Prevention is, at all events, better than cure, *finite* wisdom has long since discovered this, and thus, if the paragraph from the card be correct, god might learn from the most ignorant portion of his creatures a useful lesson. One would have thought religion was absurd enough in itself, as laid down in the book-of-books, and that, in consequence, religionists would avoid making it more absurd, or countenancing those who did so—but the fact is, that to religious absurdities there will be no end while religion lasts. The anti-corn-law party are endeavouring to diffuse, comparatively speaking, sound notions of political economy, why, then, mix wheat with the absurdities of religion? They wish men to reason correctly on commercial questions, and yet adopt means to destroy, or at least keep in subjection, the reasoning powers of mankind by humbling them at the shrine of religion. Have these men yet to learn that vicious reasoning on one subject leads to vicious reasoning on another, and that partial enslavement is the first but not the last step towards entire subjection? If they have yet to learn this, they know nothing of the nature of man. It would be much better for the cause of unfettered commerce, if its advocates would endeavour to unfetter the human mind from the fetters of religion, and they would speedily triumph. But while they are undoing with one hand, what they are attempting to do with the other, they are sure to fail. They should boldly proclaim that the apathy of the religious world is the cause of their slow progress, and they should (as they easily might) trace this pernicious result to the doctrines of religion. Free-traders declare that the evils of society are owing, in a great measure, to our present system of commerce, but religion declares that they are the necessary results of the plan of god, as seen in the nature and destiny of man. It declares, so plainly that none can mistake its meaning, that happiness is not to be the lot of humanity in this

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world, and that our efforts to obtain it will be in vain. Trusting that politicians will soon perceive that they can derive no aid from religion, and that they will help to destroy it, I remain in the cause,

AN EX-SOCIAL MISSIONARY.

IS THERE A GOD?

XXVII.

It seems sometimes taken for granted, sometimes doubted, that Hume was an atheist. The following anecdote is taken from page 179, vol. I. of the "Memoirs of the Life of Sir Samuel Romilly"—"I forget what it was I wrote to you from Ostend; I know I mentioned something of Diderot, but did I tell you how zealously he preaches his system of materialism? In the first visit I paid him, after we had talked a little on political topics, he turned the conversation to his favourite philosophy; he praised the English for having led the way to true philosophy, but the adventurous genius of the French, he said, had pushed them on before their guides. 'You,' these were his words, 'you mix theology with philosophy; it is spoiling all, it is mixing falsehood with truth; theology must be sabred.' He spoke of his acquaintance with Hume. 'I will tell you an anecdote of him, but it will scandalise you a little perhaps, for you English you believe a little in god; as for us we do not believe in him at all. Hume met a large party to dinner at the house of Baron d'Holbach. He was sitting beside the baron; they spoke of natural religion: 'As for atheists,'" said Hume, "I do not believe in their existence; I never met with any." "You have been rather unlucky," said the other, "you are now at table with seventeen for the first time." "

This reported declaration of Hume, as to the nonentity of atheists, is rather surprising. It is said to have occurred in 1781, when Hume had published his essays, where sentiments are entertained apparently quite contrary to the assertions which he is represented to have made in conversation, and it is certainly wonderful that neither Diderot nor Romilly should mention them. Brougham in his discourse seems to consider Hume an atheist, according to the common acceptance of the term. Sensible that the Scotch philosopher stands in the way of all his theories, he endeavours to remove Hume's objections to the doctrine of cause and effect. After the learned lord's struggle with Mirabaud's "System of Nature," he proceeds to the sceptical writings of Hume, as of the same tendency:

"The two most celebrated and most dangerous treatises of this great author, upon religious subjects, are those in which he has

attacked the *foundations of natural* and revealed religion—the essay on 'Providence and a Future State,' and the essay on 'Miracles.' Others of his writings have a similar tendency, and more covertly, though as surely, sap the principles of religion. But the two essays to which we have referred are the most important writings of this eminent philosopher, because they bring his sceptical opinions more directly to bear upon the systems of actual belief." Again, "The Essay on Miracles being supposed by its author sufficient to dispose of revelation, the Essay on Providence and a Future State appears to have been aimed as a blow equally *fatal to natural religion*"—that is, to the belief in a god. "We may conclude," says Brougham, "that it is not very easily answered, because, in fact, it has rarely, if ever, been encountered by writers on theological subjects. Nevertheless it strikes at the *root* of all natural religion"—that is, upsets a god. Brougham does not take notice that this essay of Hume is put in the form of a dialogue, in which the arguments of one party are answered by the arguments of the other party. However, Brougham seems to suppose, as most people do, that the objections to a Providence and a Future State, represent Hume's own sentiments on the subject. But the sum of them Brougham observes, is only this, "That the argument *a posteriori* only leads to the conclusion that a *finite* and not an infinitely, or an indefinitely, wise and powerful being exists." Are we to conclude, therefore, that Hume thought there might be a god, or superior being to us that made this world and universe? This is as much as most people believe, a few go farther, and it serves all the purposes of god. Though many would be called atheists, as some of the ancients did those who did not believe in a superintending providence. The above idea of Hume, if it were his idea of a god, seems to amount to that of the ancients, who allowed one co-existent and co-eternal with matter, his infinity, omnipotence bounded by it, or rather sharing these attributes with matter. If Hume associated matter with a *foreseeing* intelligence, he could scarcely be called a materialist. The idea of soul in man separate from the body, and of spirit separate from matter, appear to stand and fall together. Yet a person believing in matter and a finite deity, might suppose there were such formations of matter, temporary as are all formations of matter, but productive of what we call mind, which some formations certainly seem to be without.

There was at one time a great controversy in Edinburgh, as to whether Hume's theory of necessary connexion, did not necessarily infer atheism. For some principles analogous, in a scientific treatise on heat, the author, Mr. Leslie, had his elevation to the

chair of mathematics in Edinburgh opposed by the presbytery, which brought on a warm discussion. Sir James Mackintosh speaking on the subject, says of Mr. Hume's doctrine of causation, p. 251, vol. I. of his life, "According to that doctrine, indeed, it was impossible to infer a designing cause from the arrangement of the world." Mackintosh proceeds to argue against it, and says, "But it was also impossible to infer antecedent fire from ashes. Now, no theologian in his senses ever thought the first inference stronger than the second. Whatever puts them on the same level is, in truth, enough for the purpose of the theist." This appears to be entirely false assumption on the part of the objector. What Hume did assert, was that you could not infer a cause from an effect, until you had the experience of it. Therefore it was possible to infer antecedent fire from ashes, when you had not only once, but always, seen the operation of that element on certain objects. As it is equally impossible to infer a designing cause from the arrangement of the world, as it does not come within the compass of our experience, Hume does not charge the theologian with thinking the inference of a designing cause from the arrangement of the world stronger than the inference of antecedent fire from ashes. He nor his theory does not put them on the same level. Hume had no vision of any such theologian out of his senses, as Brougham, or the Rev. Mr. Irons, who, in his essay on final causes, allows it is impossible to infer a designing cause from the arrangement of the world, and that it is revelation alone which teaches us a god.

Hume in his dialogues concerning Natural Religion, introduces three persons to represent the *a priori* arguer, the atheist, and the *a posteriori* reasoner. Hume evidently thinks with the atheist. I am inclined to conceive he is of that opinion, because he makes the person who gives an account of the conversation, and who must stand for himself, profess that he does not agree with the atheist. This is always the practice of Hume, when he is afraid of being convicted of certain sentiments, which appear through all the disguise in which he seeks to conceal them. In these dialogues he gives the atheist a greater share than he allows to the other two put together. He lets the atheist alone, interrupts his *a posteriori* antagonist, and takes care when he speaks to leave his atheism unanswered. He makes the *a priori* at first support the atheist against the god of the *a posteriori*. The *a posteriori* speaks dogmatically without argument, except when he is set to demolish the position of the *a priori* in favour of a god. The *a priori* is finally represented as hoaxed, and led into consequences contrary to his wishes by the atheist—but though both the

a priori and the *a posteriori* eventually turn against the atheist, they both are made to sound his praises. Sylvain Marechal, in his dictionary of atheists, says Hume in these dialogues has exhausted the arguments on both sides of the question. Hume in another essay gives a preference to the sceptic over other philosophers, which is as far as he dared go. His writings on the reason of brutes, and in depreciation of the worth of man, and his metaphysical inquiries, all tend to materialism, and the extinction of soul in man or the universe.

W. J. B.

THEORY OF REGULAR GRADATION.

XXXV.

(Mammalia continued.)

THE following is an outline of the process by which the *teeth* are *produced*. About *two months* after conception, a gelatinous substance lies along each alveolar arch; at the *third* month this substance is firmer, and lodged in a shallow groove in the bone. It is next divided into separate pulps by transverse filaments passing from one side of the alveolus to the other. These pulps are enclosed in, and connected by, vessels to a thin vascular membrane, which between the *third* and *fourth* month begins to secrete the ossific laminae from its outer surface. This membrane, with its contained pulp, is supplied from the dental vessels and nerves, and is surrounded by a thick vascular sac, separable into two layers; the latter membrane is attached to the pulp only at its base, but is firmly connected by its outer layer to the gum, from which it derives its vascular and nervous supplies. It is from the inner surface of the internal layer of this sac that the enamel is secreted, and at this period it becomes thick and vascular, whilst the outer layer, which is only rudimentary in man, secretes the *crusta petrosa* in the graminivorous quadrupeds. After the enamel has been secreted, both layers of this sac become wholly absorbed, hence they have been termed the *deciduous membranes*, in contradistinction to the *permanent*, which are described as *three* in number, one being the periosteum of the alveolus, another the periosteum of the root, and the third the periosteum of the dental cavity, which secretes the tooth. But in fact these three permanent membranes are simply a continuation of the periosteum of the jaw which first lines the alveolus, then descends to form the periosteum of the root, and lastly passes up in the form of a hollow cone to enclose the pulp. The periosteum is the thin skin around the bones. The principal uses of this membrane are—to transmit the vessels

which are spread out upon its surface into the substance of the bones—to give attachment to muscles—to prevent the effects of friction between them and the bones—to assist in binding the latter together—to assist in setting limits to the increase, and to check the overgrowth of bones—and, in young persons, to strengthen the junction of the bones with their epiphyses, cartilages, and ligaments. The period at which the teeth appear in the human subject is very variable, some children being born with two or more, whilst in others they may not appear for two, or even three, years. From five to eight months, however, is the most usual period; they generally appear first in the lower jaw, and proceed in the following order—From 5 to 8 months, the four central incisors; from 7 to 10, the lateral incisors; from 12 to 16, the four anterior molars; from 14 to 20, the four cuspidati; and from 18 to 36 months, the four posterior molars.

On chemical analysis, the human milk contains, independently of cheese, butter, and sugar, a proportion of phosphate of lime, prepared by nature for the ossification of the new-born infant. When this is deficient, the bones remain imperfectly ossified, the teeth appear slowly and at a late period, the head and abdomen enlarge, the spine and limbs become deformed, or, to use a popular phrase, “grow out,” and the infant is affected with rickets. The same defects are induced when infants are dry-nursed, or imperfectly nursed by the lower classes, of which we have numerous examples presented to our notice every day. The lower classes are compelled to commit their infants to the care of older children, or girls, who are unable to exercise them properly or keep them clean or comfortable. If we add to this, that breast-milk is withheld, except in the morning and evening, and improper food substituted for it, we can readily perceive the exciting cause of rickets and deformities among children of the labouring poor. Some women secrete milk which is too rich, and which causes indigestion, griping, green dejections or motions, and cutaneous eruptions; others, a fluid which is serous, watery, or acid, and acts as a diuretic. Different kinds of milk are observed among animals. That of one cow forms more butter, that of another more cheese, and that of a third an acid fluid, which will not supply either substance. This difference explains the fact, that some healthful women who have an abundance of milk, are compelled to procure wet-nurses, as their infants emaciate, and will die if suckled with the maternal fluid. There is a principle in milk besides the preceding qualities—a vital principle, a certain degree of vitality—which evaporates on the fluid being exposed to the air, or on being boiled. In

proof of this, I may mention, that if breast-milk be collected in a bottle and given to an infant, a sufficient aliment is not afforded; and that women, when excited by passion, who have suckled their infants, have often caused them to be suddenly attacked with convulsions. The milk in the breast only contains the vivifying principle. A remarkable illustration of this doctrine is given by M. Leroy. He states, that the administrators of the hospital at Aix, in Provence, consulted the faculty of medicine of Paris, in 1775, to inform them of the means of preserving foundling infants, as those under their care perished about the fourth month and a half. They desired to know the cause of this disaster, and the means of remedying it. The faculty appointed M. Leroy, as their commissioner, to give an answer. He replied that the mortality was caused by feeding the infants from a boat or cup, and that they did not receive a principle sufficiently vivifying for their conservation; that, at the age mentioned, nature commenced her efforts for development, and that the infant could not support this critical period, unless it had taken a sufficiently vivifying principle with its aliment. He advised the infants to be nourished by she-goats. These animals were driven into the wards in which the children were ranged, each went in search of the child committed to its nourishment, raised the bed-covering with its horns, and placed its udder near the mouth of its charge; and in a short time children were reared in the hospital in great numbers. But the infants to whom watered cow's milk was given almost always died; this milk had lost, by exposure to air, its vital principle, and the mortality was always great when children were nurtured with this aliment. They were affected with marasmus, worms, scrofula, &c.—(Medicine Maternelle, by M. Leroy.)

The animal nature of the food of the carnivora bespeaks a short and simple form of alimentary canal. In some, as the lion and the cat, the stomach is elongated in form, and its orifices remote from each other, this is particularly the case in the lynx; in others, as the racoon, it is nearly globular, and in all, with the exception of the seal, its interior is smooth, and almost without villi. The monotremata, cheiroptera, insectivora, and marsupialia, also present a simple stomach, a cæcal portion being but little developed. When, however, the food is of a more mixed character, the stomach becomes more elongated transversely, as in the quadrumana and others of the less carnivorous tribes. Several of the pachydermata, marsupialia, edentata, and quadrumana, form a link of transition to the more complex stomachs of the cetacea and ruminantia in the formation of folds or cæca with cuticular

linings. The intestinal canal is very short in these animals. the whole tract not exceeding three times the length of the body in the lion and wild cat. In the badger there is scarcely any distinction between small and large intestine; but in the lion, seal, and others, it is well marked.

In the cetacea the tongue is short, thick, fleshy, and but little susceptible of motion, and in the whale it often affords three barrels of oil. The teeth are prehensile, and salivary glands rudimental or deficient, and the œsophagus short and wide.

The stomach of the kangaroo resembles the human colon and cœcum. The intestine of the kangaroo corresponds in its great length and convolutions with the coarse nature of its vegetable food, and the cœcum is about fifteen inches long.

The ruminating animals, or animals that chew the cud, from ruminantia, a meditating upon, possess four stomachs: the first, *magnus venter*, or *paunch*, receives the crude unmasticated food, while the animal is grazing. When this cavity is filled the animal retires to rest, and begins to ruminate; the unmasticated food, softened in the paunch, now passes in small portions into the second cavity, called *reticulum*, or honey-comb; from this it passes, as a bolus, up through the œsophagus to the mouth, where it is thoroughly masticated and insalivated; it is next conducted by the œsophagus to the third stomach, termed *manyples*, or omasum, tripe or chitterling, and from thence into the fourth stomach, called *abomasum*, the tripe or rennet-bag. The fourth stomach of the ruminantia is the first developed; in the earlier periods of life it is the largest, and the only one employed in digestion. The mechanism by which milk is transmitted directly into the fourth stomach during the period of suckling is this, the œsophagus enters just where the three first cavities approach each other, here it can open directly into the first or second stomach, but instead of terminating there, it is continued in the form of a groove with prominent lips, which admit of being drawn together so as to form a complete canal, which then constitutes a direct continuation of the œsophagus into the third stomach, but this cavity not having been distended with solid food in the young animal, it merely forms a tube through which the milk passes into the fourth stomach. In the adult animal the same mechanism continues, but here the third cavity, having been already distended, receives the bolus after rumination.

In the ruminants without horns, as the dormedary, the camel, and the lama, a somewhat different, but not less beautiful mechanism prevails, fitting them to live in the sandy deserts and arid plains they inhabit. In these animals the paunch consists of two

compartments, the first of which receives the unmasticated food, from which it is returned to the mouth, moistened by the fluid of the second or cellular compartment. After the cud has been chewed, the food passes along the upper part of the second cavity into the third, and from that to the fourth. When the camel drinks, the water passes directly into the second cavity, and when this is full, it flows into the neighbouring cellular compartment of the paunch. In the bullock, the three first cavities are lined with cuticle; in the camel it lines only the two first, and terminates just within the orifice of the third, the surface of which has a faint appearance of honey-comb structure. From the comparative view which has been taken of the stomach of the bullock and camel, it appears, that in the bullock there are three cavities formed for the preparation of the food, and one for its digestion. In the camel, the two compartments of the first cavity answer the purposes of the two first stomachs of the bullock; the second is employed as a reservoir for water only; the third is so small and simple in its structure, that it is not easy to ascertain its particular office, whilst the fourth is that in which the process of digestion is accomplished.

POLITICS FOR POLITICIANS.

III.

Be ye not like the sheep, which when the wolf has carried off one of them, are frightened for a moment, and then continue to graze, thinking perhaps he will be satisfied with a first or a second victim. "What business have I," says each survivor, "to make myself uneasy concerning them he devours; how will it affect me individually, will it not leave me the more grass?"—*F. De La Mennais.*

THE whole religious world are in arms against a measure for educating factory children, whose deplorable mental destitution was ably exposed by Lord Ashley and others, at the opening of the present session. But such is the immorality of religion, so essentially unjust and disgraceful is it in principle, that its *teachers* one and all declare that the children in factories shall have no education without they have the sole controul over that education—each party demanding *exclusive* power. The present opposition on the part of dissenters and others need not surprise any but the unreflecting, for the religious principle is to crush the mind, or rather to prevent its growth, by confining it when young within the iron cap of superstition—as the Chinese prevent the growth of their ladies' feet, by placing them in small boots. I am happy to observe, however, that their very partial success in this agitation,

compared with others they have set afloat, shows that society is struggling to emancipate itself from the swaddling clothes of the baby-god's theology, in spite of priestly anathemas. How shall we account for the great body of the people being led blindfold for ages, and that even now to point out their condition or their absurdities, often induces them to rivet themselves faster in their errors, and to confute them is a fruitless labour? Why, but that men have become the dupes of a set of sharpers who, under the name of religionists, have fleeced them of their reason! Surely god-belief is a horrid delusion and a terrible curse.

It is almost universally admitted that man is a progressive being, therefore it must follow that the institutions which surround him should partake of the same character—or misery in amount proportionate with the severity with which fixed institutions are carried out will be the result. Our government is the determined enemy to progression, its members act as if society existed for them, and not they for society, and hence the phrases, of “fixed laws,” “final measures,” &c. Common sense and a natural sympathy would dictate the necessity for sweeping from the face of the country governments so discordant with the nature of the beings for whom they pretend to exist. Monarchy is a despotism engendered in ignorance, perpetuated by blood, and exists only by force and fraud. It is an institution that serves as a blind for the villainies of banded aristocratic and priestly leeches, who suck the blood of the community. Man, I have already said, is in a constant state of progression, and it is fitting the national institutions should likewise be so, and they whose arms defend the country from foreign aggression, should be prepared to defend themselves from the worse than foreign infringement, that of our trinity of home despots. Knowledge is power—very likely, but it must be the knowledge to wrest your liberties by the same means they are withheld from you, if needful—and is it expected that men standing on the brink of misery are to philosophise on the time when moral force will liberate this country—when they, their wives and families, will have descended into the outcasts grave! No, no, in charity to the majority let us hasten by every means in our power to destroy the hellish compact that grinds us to dust. Let every one recollect that on the destruction of *religion* depends our liberty, for *religion and liberty can never co-exist*. Let the fountains of the great deep of knowledge be broken up, let our childish dogmas and our proved to be accursed religion be shaken off, and let bible and god-believers be set down either as knaves or fools. Do the people of this country not know that our aristocrats and priests laugh in their sleeves at the absurd tales of

heavens, hells, gods, and devils, with which they have imposed on the ignorant, while they despise them for it?

The first object of every one should be to discover the best mode of government suited to the advanced state of man in this country—one that shall arrange and govern in that manner best suited to the interests of all, and I know of none more suited to the present state than republicanism, a form of government little understood in this country, but which simply means the equality of representation, uncursed with monarchs, aristocrats, or state religions, and which has the advantage of being established on a principle that admits of change with the increasing intelligence of the age, or as it has been pictured forth by one who resides in America, Miss Wright, “That it has the simple machinery of representation, carried through all its parts, and gives facility for its being moulded at will to fit with the knowledge of the age—that thus, although it should be imperfect in any or all of its parts, it bears within it a perfect principle—the principle of improvement.” Such is the government I would recommend to the people of this country, and sooner or later I hope it will be adopted. The numbers favourable to this view are yearly increasing, and are pressing forward with a vigour surprising to the defenders of things as they are. Every passing event shows the dawn of a new era—every struggle of the press for unlimited freedom of speech, foretells a revolution. Yes, *a revolution*. There is no blinking the fact, that the patience of a famishing people is wearing out—and that the weapons of war are still in the hands of the oppressors, but they must be wrenched from them, and those who expect liberty must win it ere they wear it.

It is time the ice was broken—time that men considered they have the same right to regain their liberties as have been used to enslave them, and success will depend on the energy exerted by the belligerents. Men should likewise know, that by putting tyrants in fear, is the best mode of obtaining their own, and I for one would gladly lend a helping hand to destroy the monster incubuses, yclept priests, monarchs, and lords, and lay them in one common grave, and the country would be all the better for the riddance of such a nest of vampyres.

Working men, look around you, it is your duty to prepare for the events which must take place, you should be prepared by a knowledge of what is most conducive to human happiness, to turn any change for the benefit of your class. You should be able to look down with contempt on all the phantasmagoria of religion, and avoid its nets, traps, false pretences, and debasing

demoralisation — then, when intelligence beams from the millions, away goes our churches, jails, bastiles, paupers, debtors, felons, and sorrow-stricken outcasts. Let us by diffusing education, be prepared to avert the calamities resulting from a change by force—for force always supposes the people goaded on to desperation by a blood-thirsty set of demons, who pretend to a right to coerce mankind into obedience to their despotic sway—when a nation desires to be free, she can be so. Let us never lose sight of our American brethren, who gallantly threw off the yoke, and made England's haughty assassins yield the palm to freedom's volunteers—and what they did may be done again. Remember this earth can be made more than the heaven you anticipate, a heaven in which everything that can gratify human beings can be secured, and surely if men can fight, spill their blood like water, in anticipation of an impossible existence, they may for a paradise that is within the reach of all men. It is pleasing to regard society as travelling onwards to this state of things, and in proportion to the difficulties that beset our path, so should our exertions be vigorous, it is the duty of every individual to assist in spreading the principles of atheism and republicanism, to those of our fellows whose thoughts have been warped in youth or perverted in age—or those in whom the darkness of ignorance prevails. Remember you should not carry your lights under a bushel—but let them be shed abroad, and let their rays penetrate the regions of night. By increasing intelligence we hasten a change, which the intelligent few must desire, it likewise tends to diminish crime, which governments as at present constituted propagate, therefore by diminishing crime, we weaken a rotten and domineering faction, and pave the way for upsetting a system of damnable and atrocious imposition.

T. P.

THE WORCESTER BRANCH.

FIAT justitia ruat cœlum—let justice be done though the heavens do fall—is, in my opinion, one of the most useful maxims among men. Its spirit has pervaded, and I trust ever will pervade, the *Oracle's* pages. For this reason, Mr. Editor, I wish to notice the proceedings of the Worcester branch. Some branches of the Rational Society have been noticed in the *Oracle* for displaying what the writers considered to be a sectarianism at variance with socialism's principles, and a narrow-mindedness that belied socialism's influence. It is, therefore, just to notice pleasing instances of a contrary nature.

A syllabus of a course of lectures issued

by the Worcester branch a few weeks ago, was prefaced by these frank words :

"In these lectures there is no attempt to gloss over, or conceal the truth, that reason and not revelation—that morality, and not religion—that individual exertion, and not dependance upon providence, will ever emancipate society from the multifarious evils under which it labours. In treating important questions, affecting the vital interests of humanity, all attempt at concealment, subterfuge, or equivocation, is regarded as disgraceful to a good cause, and unworthy ingenuous and honest men."

Many persons would deem this going "too far," in a cathedral city, but I did not meet with half-a-dozen dissentients. Nothing was said in defence of that contemptible policy, which, for the sake of respectability, puts on appearances of orthodoxy. When here and there a timorous friend reported that the public—that is, the bigots in the various congregations—had said that the branch were sanctioning atheism, the branch on the next bill they issued said ;

"The board of management of the Hall of Science have heard that they will be identified by the public with Mr. Holyoake's opinions concerning deity. Upon this point their answer is—that they conceive that they have a right to engage a mohammedan, an atheistical, a christian, or a pagan lecturer, without consulting any man's idiosyncracies, and without asking man's permission. The board engage any person they choose, and no more think of consulting christians, than christians, in such a case, would think of consulting them. Besides, Mr. Holyoake having been persecuted for his opinions, has purchased a right to be publicly heard in his own defence."

Such sentiments and conduct placed the branch high in the estimation of all honourable men in the city. Many highly respectable parties, who differed from us in opinion, repeatedly assured me that they respected such candour and independance. Nor was the course lost upon religious opponents. In public discussion and private comment, of which I heard much, they appeared to feel that new tactics were necessary. Zealots in religion began to perceive what before had been denied, that we were sincere. They no longer denounced, for they found denunciations were impotent upon men who boldly stood by their opinions. Ugly words they ceased to employ, for we made the ugly words seem pretty by frequent use of them. Familiarity had robbed them of their terrible import. The epithet "atheist"—that commander in chief of the army of religious hobgoblins—became a common-place, a household word. Christians found they had no weapons left wherewith to alarm the silly and the weak, and

they at last tried to reason—to convince the men whom they could no longer cajole—and whom they had lost the power to intimidate. Much of this good was owing to Mr. S. Raby, the president. When his opinion of, and consent to, the course was asked, he instantly approved and said he was a moralist, and he neither cared nor wished to be known by any other name. His preference was *not* to be thought religious. These sentiments are the more interesting as they were uttered upon what he believed, and what I fear will prove, his dying bed.

The last sentence in the paragraph last quoted contains to me gratifying information. It appears that what before was presumption is now become a right—that I have paid the penalty of heterodoxy, and purchased the privilege to talk blasphemy as long as I live. Certainly I am obliged to christians for a license so agreeable to my feelings, and so necessary to my practices.

After the squall at the Rev. Mr. Crow's, or as the Worcester people profanely say, at the Rev. "Jim Crow's," referred to in a recent *Oracle*, under the head of the "Amiable Dissenters," nothing occurred to diversify our amusements except this little incident. The superintendent of police applied to a bookseller for the *Oracle* and Mr. Paterson's Trial, and a few articles in that line. The bookseller not being pleased with his customer did not supply them. Upon hearing this, Mr. Paterson, with his usual solicitude for the happiness of the pious, feared some disappointment might ensue, and he sent a note to inform the superintendent, that he always had on hand a regular supply of the article after which he had been inquiring—that he should be quite proud of his custom—and that in the blasphemy way he believed that he could suit the most fastidious taste. I did think that Mr. Paterson's professional skill, and well-know standing in the business, would have secured him the superintendent's orders. But it was no go, whether some competitor sold at reduced prices I know not, certainly Mr. Paterson's laudable design of turning a penny with the county, in his peculiar way, was frustrated.

G. J. H.

THE LATE DUKE OF SUSSEX.

THE *English Churchman* has the following:—"We have announced elsewhere the death of the Duke of Sussex, which took place at Kensington Palace on Friday. We will not be hypocritical enough to write a eulogy, which, as churchmen, we cannot feel. His whole life having been spent among Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics of every sect, to whose interests he devoted those somewhat overrated talents which he possessed, his biography in the hands of churchmen would

not be very promising. We were unworthy of the name we bear, did we not freely condemn his public conduct; all that he was remarkable for was in one significant direction: to be grand master of the freemasons, which society we conceive to be a substitute for, and irreligious imitation of, the christian church, were a fit preparation for interment in Kensal-green. To be buried in the sepulchre of his fathers, is a privilege which his royal highness has foregone. He will be interred in the same cemetery with Mr. Richard Carlile." —[The *Oxford Chronicle*, a church-and-state paper, whose patrons must keep on the right side of the government and the crown, if they have any hopes for preferment, says of the honest expression of opinion of the puseyite organ, "We add no comment—the condemnation of these bitter and anti-christian (?) priests is, next to the praise of good men, the best tribute to the worth of the departed prince. These are the men that claim exclusive possession of 'all that is holy and righteous in the church.' " Faugh! this from churchmen, the implacable and bitter enemies of dissent—ridiculous hypocrisy! We have once before asked, why was Carlile buried in the consecrated part of the cemetery? Was it at his own request, or by the wish of his sons? They brought upon themselves the insult of having the church mummery read over their father, if by their wish. Perhaps some one of Mr. Carlile's numerous friends or admirers will answer this query. —Ed. of *O.*]

What's hallowed ground? Has earth a clod
That priests dare say shall not be trod
By man, the maker of their god,
Erect and free,
Unscourged by superstition's rod
To bow the knee?

That's hallowed ground—where mourned and missed,
The lips repose our love has kissed;
But where's their memory's mansion? Is't
Yon churchyard's bowers?
No! in ourselves themselves exist,
A part of us.

To incantations dost thou trust,
And pompous rites in domes august?
See mouldering stones, and metal's rust,
Belie the vaunt,
That man can bless one pile of dust
With chime or chaunt.

PRACTICAL PIETY, IN 1843.—Two days no amusement and no work for the death of the Duke of Sussex. What an absurdity to make people suffer in their purses and their pleasures, who would not otherwise grieve for an individual that they never knew, except by paying for his support.

Next Week—No. II. of the Library of Reason.

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ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE”

No. 77.]

EDITED BY “THE MAN PATERSON.”

[PRICE 1D.]

EPISTLES—NOT PAUL’S

WE blasphemers have our four gospels—acted, spoken, and written by martyrs to the cause. The genuineness and authenticity of Hetherington, Southwell, Holyoake, Paterson, and their works, no one will dispute. The last comes out like the mystic St. John on “the word.” We have expounded in the frontispiece of his trial the incomprehensible trinity of “The Man Paterson” on earth, and his necessary association with the father, the son, and the pigeon in heaven. He was the father and son from the time he was born—born of Mr. and Mrs. Paterson. No chiaroscuro of angels and pigeons to cuckold husband Joseph, and make the betrothed virgin Mary produce a child, were employed in the creation of Paterson. No honourable name was lost, no families discredited, no risk of punishment, like Mary run of stoning, for adultery was incurred in the birth of our father-son. The character of parents, of son, of the invisible pigeon, were spotless as the lamb in the person of Paterson, offered up for the sins of the world. There was no bungling machinery of means to an end, no design and contrivance and ferreting of brains in the creation of Paterson. The trinity of old are now blushing with a bloody sweat at their own obscenity, compared with the decent means Paterson took of revealing himself to the world. The new revelation of their “glory” being just in the former “back parts” style of the ancient of days. Our father-son, heaven and earth, were compounded at once in the nature of the Man Paterson. There was no necessity of tacking on our father-son to earth by a miserable genealogy, with half-a-dozen miscalculations in figures, and contradictions to former statements in it. The ignorance of the evangelists of what was in the old Jew-book, and of arithmetic, being shown in the beginning of their story. That they might be borne out by analogy in the end, when Jesus did not turn out a messiah to his chosen people, and to make him out a god, three were to become one, and one was to be three. The genealogy of Paterson’s family goes so far back, no one can trace it from eternity to eternity, as long as there was, is, and will be anything living, so long have been and will be the generations of father and son in Paterson.

When his name was first impressed on the nature of things, no one can tell—before the foundations of the world were laid, the spiritual seeds of time were sown, which were to conceive and fulfil their eternal purpose in bringing forth the material and temporal man Paterson. His sponsors said thou shalt call his name Paterson. No Emanuel juggle prophetic of a name that was never given. An unbelieving world, not knowing the truth that was in them, christened him The Man Paterson, and thus unwittingly fulfilled what was pre-ordained. The omnipotence, the omniscience, and benevolence of Paterson wanted no Judas to bring on his sacrifice. As the incarnation of our father-son was without confusion, so he included, in his all-comprehensibility, the traitor, by surrendering himself to injustice. The prophesied thirty pieces of silver, the old price of a trinity, raised, in his case, to forty, he kept in his pocket—he that provided the sacrifice of the lamb to his persecutors, was not going to give Mint sauce to the feast. He was sentenced without law, in order that the innocence of the victim might be clear, and his atonement perfect. The re-appearance of the trinity was sent to Tothill Fields, like Christ to the mountain Golgotha, outside the city. Paterson was fixed straight to his cross, not allowed to look right or left—they pierced his hands with stripes of oakum, and the surgeon gave him a preparation, like “vinegar and myrrh,” to dress his wounds—and the gaoler gave him water to drink, like horse at a stand, just as Jesus had his face sponged, that all might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet. When the prison gates gave up the ghost of the modern trinity to his friends, not a bone of his body was broken, spite of the declaration of Knight Bruce Satan to contravene the prophecies. Though his enemies tried to kill him, The Man Paterson hath not seen corruption, either morally or physically, and still continues with his church, the *Oracle of Reason*, unto the end of all things.

I shall leave to others the acts of the apostles, and will only enact the humbler character of St. Paul, trying by my epistles to convert an unbelieving world, and, like my prototype, drawing out the invisible by the visible things of this world.

The trial of Holyoake brings to mind so many circumstances in the new Jew-book

apposite to the conduct of our pharisees, scribes, and lawyers, that they plainly show they were written prophetically of our authorities, and not of the Jewish.

The manner in which Holyoake was entrapped at Cheltenham, the mock Jerusalem of our holy land, is quite similar to the mode in which Jesus was said to have been brought to trial, and made subject to punishment. Mr. Close did not ask Mr. Holyoake to dine with him, when he went down to lecture at Cheltenham, which Luke states happened to Jesus similarly situated: "In a certain place, and as he spake, a certain pharisee besought him to dine with him, and he went in and sat down to meat." Jesus had not been very complimentary to his generation, when he was interrupted in his discourse by this kind invitation to dinner. When the wine had probably wrought inspiration in him, he became personally abusive to his host, and all those who, in common with himself, shared the hospitality of the pharisee. We may admit in extenuation of his language, that he had lived in the company of fishermen, which have in all ages and in all countries produced a Billingsgate style of expression. If men were as meek, humble, lowly, and poor in spirit, as Jesus told them to be, in order to be the objects of his reproaches and abusive violence, they must lose their neighbours much more than themselves to submit in silence to such accusations and such denouncements. Most people would say on a common occasion, that there was sufficient ground of quarrel in the language first used by Jesus, and we find that "As he said these things unto them, the scribes and the pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things, lying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him." George Jacob Holyoake went down to Cheltenham to lecture on home colonisation, emigration, and the poor laws. The baits of blasphemy were immediately set, George Jacob Holyoake, more innocent-minded than Jesus, was immediately taken and sent to gaol to await his trial. Our apostle had no friendly intercourse with the parson of the parish, whose duty it was first to try and convert any stray sheep who might have wandered into his fold. But the great pharisee of the place, agreeably to his name, stuck to the *close* system, and as shepherd of the flock, without vouchsafing a word, committed our lamb to prison, the butcher, and the knife. No doubt Mr. Close's sheep-folds and pockets are so closely crammed, that he does not affect, like his master, to bring sinners to repentance, and save their souls. The Magdalens are cleared from the streets by the magistrates—infidels are handed over to the assizes—and the ministry made as close a system as heaven it-

self. George Jacob Holyoake did not steal a donkey or bstride a couple of asses to enter our modern Jerusalem, at the head of a mob calling him king, which title Jesus did not refuse—Holyoake did not march at the head of a multitude, and put the magistrates into a fright, not knowing what to do, like Jesus with his assemblage—Holyoake did not proceed to the church of Mr. Close, and make a turn out in his manufactory, as Jesus, accompanied by his rabble, did in the temple of Jerusalem.

Though Jesus had transgressed the laws of the Jews, Romans, those of England, and all civilised states, had they to try him—though he had already shown that he was not a moral, but a physical, force man in carrying his own incomprehensible charter—yet the chief priests and the scribes did not think they were sufficiently justified in laying hands upon him, and only did what those of Cheltenham did to Mr. Holyoake, before he had uttered a word. "And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor." They tried to draw Jesus into some opinion derogatory to the empire of the Cæsars, and Mr. Holyoake into the utterance of sentiments which might be considered treasonable to their god at Cheltenham.

Of course Mr. Holyoake could not believe that a thing was god, any matter, or any *thing* in the heavens above, the earth beneath, or waters under the earth, according to the commandment. There is no coinage from the mint of heaven with his image and superscription upon it, therefore, according to the testimony of Jesus, "Render unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's and unto god the things which be god's," Mr. Holyoake would have been justified, not in generously allowing half-pay, but refusing any pay to the self-appointed tax-gatherers of god. What does George Jacob Holyoake do when he is aware that he shall be arrested? Does he, like Jesus, tell his hearers to arm themselves? Does he advise them to get together all the money they can to help his escape, and leave the city for the fields with only two swords, judging, like Jesus, in his hurry to be off, that two were sufficient for his defence, and that full purses were the better sineews of war? Does George Jacob Holyoake, like Jesus, pass a night in the suburbs, alternately meditating flight, defence, or tame submission to his apprehension, and the consequences of his conduct? Physically and morally in the agony of perplexity, sweating blood, and though he had denounced long prayers, never resting, but trying to arouse the deaf ear of heaven by his importunity—

whilst he was under such terrors, he had to rouse his disciples, who were quietly sleeping, to defence or prayer. Lastly, did George Jacob Holyoake allow an infatuated follower, like Jesus did Peter, whom he had instigated to the commission of the crime, and thereby made himself an accessory before the fact, to strike at the head of an officer who was sent to take him up, and actually cut off his ear? Though Jesus did not, as he reproached the lawyers, raise a little finger in the work of his own defence, but, according to Matthew and Mark, quietly welcomed the kiss of the traitor Judas. George Jacob Holyoake, like an honest man, without evasion answers the questions put to him, without a warrant for his arrest, goes with the constable before the magistrates, and the secretary of state pronounces them guilty of serious irregularities, and unnecessarily harsh treatment in the whole affair.

PARLIAMENTARY CANT AND SACRED SLANG.

IF there be an infidel party in the House of Commons, Roebuck may be said to represent it. He brought on his motion for secular education with all the honied words which a slave might use in supplicating a master, when he addressed Sir James Graham. He was nervously afraid of offending the religious and the church. If any compromise were to be made, he said it was to be made to the church. "He should be carrying out the opinion of the majority by so doing, for there could not be a doubt that the church of England, in England, comprised an enormous majority of the population." I am pretty certain that this is not an accurate calculation for the manufacturing population of our towns, on whose account arises this education question. The people of this country are influenced by other considerations than religion, to declare themselves of the church, and apart from external circumstances, and the compulsion of fanaticism, I think that the majority would be found to be like those in the Nottingham Union, "of no religion at all," "I am not particular," and "what you please." The English turned over so many times from one faith to another, during the progress of the Reformation, that a foreign ambassador wrote home, they would become Mohammedans to-morrow, if there was anybody to buy them over to that persuasion. Therefore a church majority ought not to have so much weight as the corrupt majority of a rotten borough. Mr. Roebuck proceeds to say, "If he was to follow out the principle of private judgment, he claimed it for all sects, for Jew, Turk, and deist, and if there

were such a being, for him who was of no religion." Mr. R. will not believe in the official accounts of the Nottingham Union, as a test of the labouring population, nor in the readers of the *Oracle of Reason*. There was a man at Liverpool, according to the *Investigator*, who advertised that he was an atheist. Should not the atheists present a petition to the House of Commons for secular education, "We the undersigned atheists," &c., just to convince Mr. Roebuck and the house that there were atheists, and to relieve ourselves from the aspersion of character, that we were of some religion? This poor radical freethinker was obliged to make an apology for what he had said in favour of secular education, and, in reply, stated "That his views on the subject had not been properly represented. The right hon. baronet had stated that he had proposed a scheme of national education to the exclusion of all religious instruction. He repudiated the imputation."

Sir James Graham, on the part of the church and government, talked of "The religious sanction as the first and most important principle of all, and that he did believe that upon this great cardinal point there was a strong and almost universal concurrence of feeling, that education, to be sound and to be safe, must be based on scriptural knowledge. To those who believed in the great truths of christianity, those truths must always operate powerfully in exciting the feelings; but legislators in directing the operation of those truths should use them, not for the purpose of excitement, but of salvation." At the mention of great truths, there was not one who dared get up and cry out, "name, name," as members do on occasion of other anonymous insinuations. That the sun is in the heavens, and several other of the operations of nature are great truths—but that a father pleased himself by putting to the torture, and becoming the murderer of his own son—in order to avenge himself upon some, and be reconciled to others—instead of being a great and universal truth, is a monstrous exception that it would be difficult to find an example of in all the madmen of the world. That a virgin produced a child—that three make one, and one makes three—are not great truths, but outrageous falsehoods. That a convicted and executed felon, who was put to death near two thousand years ago, should walk after his death, still be living, and be expected in person, is an enormous lie, which swells in size every moment. That that felon on the cross should have been the creator of the universe, come to save his own by dying the death of a malefactor, on one of his many millions of globes, must certainly be allowed to operate so powerfully on the feelings of

those who believe it, that the world can never be judged safe from the excitement of those who are taught that such a falsehood is a great truth.

Mr. Shiel said, on the part of the Roman catholics, "They objected to the indiscriminate perusal of the bible, first, on the ground that the old testament contained the *records of a carnal people*, and next, because there were passages in the new testament, and more especially in St. Paul, which were *difficult to be understood*, and required the intervention of an interpreter."

Mr. Milnes is of the poetical, puseyite, Thomas Carlile order, and looks with pitying contempt on the mob, because, like Coleridge, he has a religion of his own, which he cannot explain, and therefore they cannot understand. He panegyrised the church, and the puseyite portion of it, and said that if churchmen and dissenters could not agree on the subject of education, parliament must adopt the plan suggested by Mr. Roebuck.

Next comes Mr. Hawes, the representative of the dissenters, the man who was the chairman of the committee on the metropolitan police act, which served a Jardine to put Paterson in prison and to torture. It will be seen, on comparing his speech with Sir James Graham's, how near the dissenters agree in doctrine with the church, how they fight exactly on the same principle, to exclude all others from an education which may be disagreeable to them, but which they and the church have agreed upon. "He (Mr. Hawes) could not give his vote with his honourable and learned friend, Mr. Roebuck. The dissenters alone ought to share education with the church. Of this he was quite sure, that the hope expressed by Mr. Milnes would not be realised. He would venture to say, that no system of education would be acceptable to the dissenters which excluded the bible from their schools—and he hoped never to see a system which excluded a free and entire access to the scriptures. He regarded the bible not only in a religious sense, but he looked upon it as the best foundation for our civil and religious liberty. It was the book to which, through all our great struggles for liberty, reference has ever been made."

Here is the old impudence of these god-mongers, if you ask for a right, they receive it as an injury. If you ask for freedom from persecution, they call it intolerance. Mr. Hawes would insinuate that a secular education excludes a free and entire access to the scriptures. That is, if the scriptures are not forced upon all, as a part of education, the dissenters have no freedom—we have shut their bible, because we do not make all read it. As a preacher some time ago was reported in the papers to have said,

that the whig government, then in office, did not uphold the protestant establishment, if they did not give the M'Ghees, and other firebrands, artillery to support them in their pulpits against the papists. Is free and entire access taken from korans, shastres, newspapers, novels, romances, because a master does not choose that they should be read in school-hours? Children may all go to their politics, religion, and amusements, even to the profane and indecent tales in the classics and the Jew-book, after they have learnt some positive knowledge about which none disagree.

Sir James Graham says education must be based on scriptural knowledge, and the great truths of christianity must be taught. With Hawes and the dissenters, the bible is all-in-all. It is not only good for salvation but the panacea in politics. The right of private judgment cannot be allowed unless you swallow entire the bible, not in the more digestible forms of church doctrine, but in the crude state. The book which has been the cause of dissension in religion, amongst all the divines ever since christianity was introduced, is certain in its application to politics. All the murders, robberies, obscenities, in the Jew-book, are sacred in the imagination and fit for the use of a dissenter. So it was, by seeking the lord god of the Jews and the christians, and drawing examples and texts from holy writ, that the puritans massacred the idolatrous, put to death those opposed to them in politics, and refused civil and religious liberty to all who differed from them. Those creatures of the commonwealth are represented so gloomy in their looks, that if they had not had others to kill, you would think they would kill themselves—bible and blunderbuss always in hand, that if the lottery of a passage in scripture and their own interpretation was not in your favour, you might expect your fate from the alternative. From such "reference," in the name of reason and common sense, may we and the world in future ever be saved. J. W. B.

NON VERSALITY OF SPIRITUAL TALENT.
—A.D., a chartist lecturer, remarked the other day, that he could do the preaching very well, but he was a damned bad hand at prayer. The christian chartists should form a class for studying this department of their art.

It is an argument of a clear and worthy spirit in a man to be able to disengage himself from the opinions of others, so far as not to let the deference due to the sense of mankind ensnare him to act against the dictates of his own reason.—*The Tatler*.

NOTICE.

Received, the last part of the second edition of Mr. Gillespie's work from the "Philaethæan Society."

THEORY OF REGULAR
GRADATION.

XXXVI.

(Mammalia continued.)

As a general rule, it may be stated that the intestinal canal is long, large, and sacculated (from sacculo, a little bag, pouch or purse) in the herbivorous tribes, and short, straight, and without sacculi, in the carnivora. Some remarkable exceptions, however, present themselves, for instance in minks, mice, and shrews which are purely frugivorous, and in sloths, which live on vegetable food, the intestine measures only about three times the length of the body; whilst in the porpoise and seal, which live on animal food, it measures in the former 11 times, and in the latter 28 times the length of the body. But this apparent anomaly is explained by recollecting that the cœcum plays a compensating part with respect to the other portions of the alimentary canal, indeed, the researches of the Heidelberg professors authorise us in believing that it acts the part of a second stomach, and that where the latter is simple, the cœcum presents a complex and highly developed condition, and *vice versa*. Hence, by a reference to the highly developed cœcum and vermiform appendix of the rodentia, we are enabled to reconcile their simple form of stomach with their herbivorous food. In the elephant, the small intestine measures 38 feet, the colon and rectum $20\frac{1}{2}$ feet, and the cœcum $1\frac{1}{2}$. In the camel, the small intestine is 71 feet, the colon and rectum 56, and the cœcum 3. The intestine is 10 times the length of the body in the horse, and 28 times in the sheep. In an ornithorynchus $17\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, the small intestine measured 4 feet 4 inches, and the colon and rectum 1 foot 4 inches. In this animal, the rectum, urinary, and genital organs terminate in a cloaca, as in birds and amphibia.

The emotions of the mind have a powerful influence on the stomach. Let a person who is going to sit down to dinner with a good appetite, receive a piece of news, either exceedingly joyful or exceedingly distressing, his appetite goes in a moment. Children who are about to set out on a pleasant journey, it is well-known, cannot eat. This, when I was a child, used to be called being "journey proud." On the other hand, a blow upon the stomach will sometimes take away life instantly; a drink of cold water, when the body has been very hot, has often had the same effect. Attend to your companions, when on a journey a-foot; as their stomachs grow empty, how sullen and silent the whole party becomes; let a crust of bread, a little cheese, a glass of ale or wine be taken, and cheerfulness immediately

reigns, even long before any nutriment had time to reach the general circulative system. These things all show the general sympathy between the stomach and every other part of the body.—("Carbutt's Clinical Lectures.")

Recapitulation of the digestive process throughout the animal kingdom:—A digestive cavity is the most universal organ in animals, and exists in all, with the exception of some of the monads. Masticating, salivary, and biliary organs are found in the higher radiata. All these parts are more highly developed in the articulata, and one or two gall-bladders are present. There has been no gall-bladder found in the mollusca. The stomach receives the biliary and pancreatic fluids in all the invertebrata. The invertebrated animals possess no portal circulation. In the vertebrata, the alimentary canal always swells out into a gastric enlargement. The tributary organs are large and conglomerate, and the salivary glands are rarely absent. The duodenum receives the biliary and pancreatic secretions, and there are no teeth found in the stomach. As a general rule the alimentary canal is larger and longer in the vegetable-eating animals, than in those that live on flesh. Fishes have a simple form of alimentary canal, their teeth are often numerous, as in the pike, rarely absent as in the sturgeon, their salivary glands are rudimental, or entirely wanting, and their whole canal often measures but half the length of the body. The digestive apparatus undergoes interesting changes during the metamorphosis of the frog, &c. The teeth are absent in birds, and their place supplied by bill and gizzard. The crop is double in the pigeon, single in the fowl, and absent from the goose. The gizzard is thick and powerful in the granivorous, but thin and membranous in the carnivorous species, and the great intestine terminates in the dilatable rectal vestibule which receives the openings as the ureters, of the oviducts, or vasa deferentia, and of the bursa fabricii. The teeth are greatly modified in the mammalia, being rarely absent, as in the manis or pangolin, myrmecophaga and the echidna. The digestive system is most complex in the herbivorous ruminantia, and most simple in the carnivora; in the latter the food requires but little elaboration, hence the form of the teeth, and the great strength of the jaws are admirably adapted for seizing and tearing their living prey, here also we have a simple stomach, and a short intestine, without any provision to retard its contents. In the ruminantia, on the contrary, the jaws are elongated, and admit to free lateral motion, with flat grinding teeth, the stomach is complicated, and the intestine long and sacculated; in fact all things conspire to

ensure perfect comminution of the food, retardation of its passage, and a due absorption of its nutritious particles. (Condensed from Ever's Anatomy).

The form of the heart, and the distribution of the blood-vessels in the whole of this class so closely resemble the human type, that it becomes necessary to notice only a few individual peculiarities: in the dugong and rytina, for instance, among the cetacea, the heart is cloven by the deep separation of its two ventricles (ventriculus, little belly), and the orifice of the inferior cava is guarded by a fleshy eustachian valve, which is wholly absent in the lion, the bear, and the dog. In the monotremata, the marsupiala, the porcupine, and the elephant, the right auricle receives one inferior and two superior cavæ (caves) as in birds, and the coronary vein terminates in the left superior cava. In the ourang-outang and the mole only, is the apex of the heart inclined to the left side as in the human subject. In the upper part of the substance of the left ventricle of the pig, the stag, and other large bisulca, are two small flat bones, cruciformly disposed in the stag, they are formed about the third year of the animal's life, and are but slightly developed in the female. It has been generally supposed that the foramen (a hole) ovale and ductus arteriosus remain permanently open in seals, otters, and cetaceans, and although the dissections of Cuvier, Home, Blumenbach, and T. Bell, go to prove that they have remained unclosed in a few instances, still we must look upon these as exceptions, admitting, however, that these passages continue longer pervious in these diving animals than in other mammalia.

DISCUSSIONS AT THE "HOPE" COFFEE HOUSE, WARDOUR-STREET, SOHO.

THERE has been for several months past discussions held at the Hope Coffee-house, Wardour-street, Soho, the subjects being various—socialism, theology, tetotalism, charism, and many other questions. On Thursday evening last, at the close of a debate, the proprietress was informed by a policeman that Mr. Hardwick, the magistrate, of Marlborough-street police-office wished to speak with her the next morning, in reference to the debates carried on at her house. In compliance with this request, the daughter of the proprietress, and a friend, attended before the magistrate. Mr. Hardwick said, that he had been informed that they were in the habit of having weekly discussions in their house, and that those discussions were of a blasphemous and improper nature—and as the law in reference to coffee houses made no provisions for public debate, their purport

being for refreshments and not an arena for blasphemy, he would advise that they should be discontinued. If his suggestions were not attended to, he should give strict orders to the police to keep a watchful eye upon the house and upon the parties visiting it—and should any occasion occur for the infliction of penalties, he should enforce the heaviest in his power. Both *direct* and *indirect* means should be taken to put a stop to such debates. —[The present subject of discussion at the Hope, on Monday evenings, "Is there a god?"]

THE LONDON CITY MISSION.—Mr. Plumptre is worried out of his life now that the saints have commenced holding their May meetings at Exeter-hall. Religionists of all creeds demand his services, and he works like a mill-horse in the sacred cause. First he presides at the wesleyan missionary society; othersects then crave his services; and, lastly, the city mission opens its arms to receive him; and really the proceedings of this society, as reported in the columns of *The Morning Post*, are most amusing. The metropolitan police, it appears, have been furnished with libraries, consisting of tracts and holy books; and the "agents" have been actively engaged at those periodical evils (where the devil plays his pranks), the fairs, and more particularly during the Easter recess at Greenwich, which had been visited by 140,000 Londoners, bent upon the soul-damning sin of enjoying themselves in the fresh air. The report expressed a determination to put down, if possible, all fairs. The "agents" had also visited the Almonry, in Westminster, and the low brothels belonging to the dean and chapter; and they had also attempted to reform the inhabitants of York-square, and other places of profligacy; they had held 8606 prayer-meetings; converted two stupid Mohammedans, who had brought the giraffes to the Zoological-gardens; and they reported, moreover, that an elderly lady had presented 365 farthings, the result of her savings during twelvemonths. The society's income is about £6000 a-year, and all they have done has been to convert a couple of extremely ignorant foreigners, who will renounce christianity the moment they return home, and laugh at the missionaries for the pains they have taken to shake off their original faith. The amount subscribed at these meetings is really surprising; and yet, when money is wanted to relieve the destitution of the poor, what is given is yielded grudgingly.—*Dispatch*.

SUBSCRIPTIONS,

For the *Anti-Persecution Union*.

Mr. Gurney, Northampton, Ball and Sub-	scriptions	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	£1	7	0
Coventry ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0	2	6
											M. RYALL, Sec.	

GLEANINGS IN COVENTRY.

AT Leicester I found "tadpole," or transitional, atheists. At Worcester there are few atheists—but the most practical and useful men, not atheists, were believers in a barren god. On a recent visit to the Coventry branch, I found many disbelievers in a deity, and some of the heartiest supporters of the *Oracle* that I have anywhere met with. Of course I recommend this as a high qualification. Infidelity in Coventry is not a rickety, but a fine-grown, boy. More is done than is recorded, and liberal views extend farther than is supposed.

In every place I think that the majority of unbelievers rank with those deists whom Dr. Clarke places in the first class of infidels. Admitting a principle or power, which serves as a first cause, they rest there. They do not admit that he interferes in mundane affairs, they do not admit responsibility to god. They live as though god were not, and are, to all intents and purposes, without god in the world. They are practical atheists. They shape their conduct by the laws of morality. They do not ask will god approve this act, but they make the far more wise and useful inquiry, will it benefit my fellow-men? When arranging the preliminaries for a public discussion in Worcester, my opponent's secretary, a thorough-going christian, attached to one of his notes a printed wafer, on which were these words, "I should not ask what will man think of my conduct, but what will god think of it." This man's conduct was throughout unfair, overbearing, and mean, but true to religion—moral propriety weighed as nothing in his eyes where he thought god's glory was concerned. The religionist follows the *igneus fatuus* of god's will, the wise man appeals to the standard of morality.

I was present at the tea party—a pleasing and numerous assembly—to celebrate the birth-day of Robert Owen, held in Coventry, and took occasion to express my interest in the event. My respect for Mr. Owen's talents, and wishes for his welfare, are not diminished by an occasional dissent from his opinions. Aristotle said, I respect Plato, and I respect Socrates, but I respect truth still more. So I respect Mr. Owen, and I respect his intentions, but I respect what I conceive to be the truth still more.

At a meeting called by the dissenters, in Vicar-lane School-room, to oppose the educational bill, one of the speakers, in my hearing, related this anecdote, "I knew a member of a dissenting congregation in this city, who was requested to become a church schoolmaster in a village near this place. He objected, on the ground that he *could scarcely read or write*. But still he was

urged to accept the office." The speaker eulogised the man for being a good dissenter of some standing, and said his anecdote "showed how little churchmen cared for education." I thought it also showed how little education was necessary to make a "good dissenter," when one of some standing could scarcely read or write.

An intelligent gentleman in another quarter remarked to me, "I live near a chapel, and on week days am on friendly terms with many who attend it. But on the Sunday, when they pass my door to go to chapel, they appear not to know me, and never speak."

This circumstance strongly illustrates the influence of religion. On Sunday its unsocial effects are revived. The sight of a chapel mesmerises its devotees with intolerance.

The branch has a co-operative store, which I was told yields no despicable revenue. I mention this because it is an example which every branch might, and ought to, imitate. The plan is said to be impracticable—let Coventry answer.

The president I much appreciate, and I appreciate him because he is not a president. This praise may seem paradoxical. But experience has taught me the distinction between good sense and paternal sense.

G. J. H.

"The learned French Jesuit Sanadon, who most laboriously collated and reviewed Horace, a century ago, cites one of his odes to show that he was an Epicurean, and that he believed in the mortality of the soul, though he strives to generally conceal it through policy, and is constantly invoking the gods. Mortality here means, that human death is the same as that of a dog or a rat, or, properly speaking, that we have no souls. That is bad enough, but Epicurism goes further, it is atheism. Its followers attributed everything to nature or chance, and that is atheism in the strict sense. Despicable as was the mythology of the ancients, it at least acknowledged a providence, though in a bungling manner, and also a future state, but Epicurus denied both one and the other. Now Sanadon cites another ode of Horace to show, that he believed in this impious doctrine of fortuitous jumbling of atoms, or chance, and yet this man of no religion—this preacher of abstemiousness in mockery, and of voluptuousness in earnest—this atheist, I say, is held up to youth as the great enlightened guide and sage moralist! No writer is so often quoted by the learned, and every line of him is taught even in the entrance course prescribed to our schools by the colleges."—"Old and New Logic," by Justin Brennan.)

THE ORACLE OF REASON.

THE FREAKS OF GOD'S ELECT.

THE following poem has been ascribed to Burns. It is said to be one of his fugitive pieces, and that only four copies of it were printed. The peculiarity of style, and some circumstances attending its original distribution, have induced the opinion that Burns wrote it. If so, it is not necessary to account for its suppression in the common editions of that poet's works. Such a piece of heterodoxy would be deemed too rich for the multitude.

To gull the mob and keep them under,
The ancients told them tales of wonder.
A pious fraud, or holy blunder,
A rainbow sign,
An earthquake, or a blast of thunder,
Were held divine.

By those who've faith to swallow doses,
A wond'rous story nothing loses.
The dexterous feats ascribed to Moses
Are proof as plain
O' sleight o' hand, as Herman Boaz's*
Legerdemain.

Believe the stories o' tradition,
Let sense give place to superstition,
Their royal magic competition,
Oh, sacred fountain!
Which can a midge,† by faith's volition,
Swell to a mountain.

A god of mercy, just and good,
Held forth, as in an angry mood,
Drowning the world a' in a flood,
To punish Hymen—
And turning water into blood,
Just like a demon.

The murdered thousands, in a trice,
Made Egypt swarm wi' frogs and lice.
Had he made sheep, and cows, and rice,
His human horde, then,
Might ilk‡ ane got a hearty slice,
And praised their laird then.

Wi' hocus pocus, rod in hand—
Like Mother Goose's magic wand—
They could the elements command,
As legend's run—
Divide the sea or burn the land,
Or stop the sun.

Their prodigies Bombast surpasses—
Like dikes the ocean stood in masses,
They had flying prophets, speaking asses,
Besides a sant|| wife.
Their am'rous ghosts o'er came the lasses,
Wha lived that life.§

Their Sampson's strength lay in his hair,
Their jealous waters sterling were,

Showers of fire came frae the air,
Like brimstane danders.¶
Saints lived in fire, by virtue rare,
Like salamanders.

The apostle Paul, by fancy's whim,
Soar'd up to heaven in a dream—
And satan brought him back, 'twould seem—
So says himself'.
But how could Nick to heaven climb,
Wa's chained in hell?

This damn'd auld wily serpent, Nick,
Was promised lang a mighty kick,
But turned the chase and played a trick
On god's first-born—
He got him scourg'd, nailed on a stick,
And crown'd wi' thorns.

Just search the subject thro' the piece,
'Tis fraught wi' blunders such as these,
That reverend priests their flocks may fleece,
Wi' wally** conscience—
Teach human beings by degrees
To swallow nonsense.

The sovereign leaders o' each faction,
Join hand in hand in close compaction,
To set god's kingdom up for auction,
A lumpin' bargain—
Drives silly mortals to distraction,
Wi' their damn'd jargon.

Yet moral truth shall rule the day,
Illum'd by nature's glorious ray,
Anathema flies far away,
Wi' priests and deils,
Sound reason doth the sceptre sway,
Hard at their heels.

* A celebrated conjurer and quack.
† A gnat, or anything peculiarly small.
‡ Each. || Salt—Lot's wife.
§ Who lived at that time.
¶ Sparks from a smythe.
** Indulgent, stretching.

LIBRARY OF REASON.

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Forming part of his "Inquiry concerning Human Understanding."

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THE ORACLE OF REASON: Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE"

First Editor—Charles Southwell, imprisoned for twelve months and fined £100, for Blasphemy in No. 4.
Second Editor—George Jacob Holyoake, imprisoned for six months, for Blasphemy.
Third Editor—Thomas Paterson, imprisoned for one month, for Blasphemous Placards.
Vendors—George Adams, imprisoned for one month for selling No. 4; and Harriet Adams, his wife, arrested for selling No. 25.

No. 78.]

[PRICE 1D.

REPEAL OF THE UNION.

The *National* publishes a summary of the proceedings at a late meeting of the repeal association, in Dublin, and observes, that though Mr. O'Connell is pacifically inclined, the enemies of Ireland are not so. England is a jealous conqueror, which will not suffer that her victims should break the chain. She conquered Ireland, and she holds her oppressed poor, attached to her power by the heaviest chains. She has imposed on Ireland her laws, her aristocracy, her territorial constitution, and the dominion of her clergy. It is in this atmosphere, without air and without sun, that Ireland is condemned to exist, always destitute, and always indigent; and if her heart revolts, if her valiant population endeavour to break their chains, the cannon are ready, and the war of extermination will not long be delayed. Such, at present, is her situation. It must lead, sooner or later, to a dreadful crisis. Let Ireland prepare for it! Justice, right, and Europe are on her side. Nations will join in the contest, and wherever humanity is respected, ardent prayers will be offered for the success of the cause of Ireland, which is the cause of all oppressed people.

It is not in times of "Peace on earth and good will towards men," sung by angels and upper classes, that mankind at large will obtain their rights. Moral force may be long in the mouths of political leaders, and serve to prepare events, but physical force has ever and alone cut the Gordian knot of politics. After all the talk it will ever come to the issue, "I came not to bring peace but a sword into the world, and what will I if it be already come?" Have we not always heard from O'Connell the triumph of a bloodless revolution in catholic emancipation? But what are the facts of the case? the Peels and the Wellingtons had introduced 25,000 soldiers into Ireland. When on the eve of rebellion, the troops were found to be disaffected, and Wellington acknowledged that rather than plunge us into a doubtful civil war, he was physically obliged to give to the catholics the liberties he was morally convinced they ought to possess. Was not this a trial of physical force, in which the show and some of the circumstances of war on one side prevailed, without proceeding to all the bloody consequences? Eight hundred years of war throwing their shadows before—the anticipated shake to credit by fighting amongst ourselves, when all the rest of Europe was

at peace—all the expenses without the profits—stared John Bull in the face, who has a pocket, but no conscience, to be touched. If there had not been constant agitation in Ireland—25,000 troops on one side—Captain Rocks, "Peep o'day Boys," White Boys, a sort of guerilla warfare, on the other—harrassing marches, and men's hearts failing them for fear—there had not been a mite of justice paid into the yawning exchequer of Irish wrongs. As now and ever, all English tyrants would have sung, "Peace on earth, good will towards men, glory to god in the highest." Ireland, they would say, wants quiet to develop all her resources—tranquillity will allow capitalists to embark their fortunes in enterprises which will support the population. All its miseries must be at present—it is a course of political economy which, if time be allowed, will work a remedy for all diseases. The true religion, the protestant reformed faith, will open the eyes of the people, cure them of their superstitions, prevent them being plundered by their priests, and allow the ministers of the church-established-by-law to live peaceably on their tithes. This is a picture of kingdom-come, heaven on earth, to the upper classes—while the reverse presented to the rest is submission to starvation, all the rights of conscience disallowed, all that is worth living for in mind or body refused to the living and the human, and patient waiting for reward hereafter recommended—according to children "Open your mouth and shut your eyes, and see what god will send you." This was the humbug state of Ireland, the object of all politicians, which the whigs boasted to have commenced under their administration, and the tories fervently hoped might continue under theirs. Away with all hope for mankind, if beings were found content to live under the aggravated and unexampled wrongs of Ireland. Did the Emperor of Russia send Greek priests to take spiritual charge of the roman catholics of Poland? Or did he send them to men to receive their pay, for whom they performed no religious duties, and where there were no congregations? There are no instances in ancient or modern history of such barefaced and cruel

injustice. It was attempted in Scotland, and some honourable men made a scarecrow of an archbishop, by his assassination, which deterred the rest of the black carrion birds from settling on the country. Ireland would do well to begin by a systematic assassination of all the parsons in that country, beginning with the worst, and proceeding to the best men, if they were obstinate enough to remain in the country.

I never heard that the muftis and the ulema, the priests of the mussulmen, made the Greeks pay for the muezzins, or prayers, of the mohammedan church. Yet for far less and fewer wrongs, with many advantages arising from their union with the Turks, having all their commerce and navy, filling situations of capacity, and being very little taxed at home, the Greeks accomplished, amidst the plaudits of Europe, a repeal of the union. The ancient Helots, in the same situation as the Irish are to the English, never ceased rising, though unsuccessfully, against their Spartan masters until both were lost sight of by what is called in history their common ruin, which means equal rights and liberties to both parties in the state—not the glory of union, all to one and none to the other.

The people who sing peace on earth and goodwill towards men, as long as they have it all their own way, and talk of and practise wholesale massacres, fire, sword, and brimstone, at the least symptom of opposition, say, when all the injustice of the Irish church is charged against them, "The tithe is only a rent charge on the land." Rent charge! let it be, but let it be applied to proper purposes, the relief of the poor or secular education of the people, not be taken from what it was given for and applied to the direct opposite, in order to insult those whose property it was. Infidels may say it is a quarrel between two sects of bigots, protestants and catholics—but there is a measure of justice and injustice, and surely no greater wrong was ever perpetrated by one set of men over the other, than by the dominant few over the oppressed many in Ireland. It is part of a generous mind to side with the weak against the strong, though the immediate subject matter of the quarrel may not interest him. But that the quarrel will interest atheists and republicans, I am certain. In the first place, Ireland will much more readily embrace infidelity, when controversies between sects are at an end. Nothing so likely to keep up the religious spirit as ceaseless contention about trifles. The roman catholics of Ireland will become as infidel as their brethren on the continent, when let alone. The most bigotted roman catholics in Europe, are not so bigotted as the protestants in England. Scarcely any roman catholic country has the ecclesiastical tyranny established by law, the encroachments of re-

ligion in civil matters, which our boasted land of liberty patiently endures. The continent generally, as far as irreligion goes, has a better basis for new political institutions than there is in this favoured spot of fanaticism. Besides, there is wanted convulsion to break up the stagnation occasioned by the peace on earth, good will towards men people—those dillitanti politicians, as Carlyle calls them, who will fight over a factory education bill of a Graham, that he calls an olive branch, which all parties may accept—the people whom the Ashleys, the Broughams, the Roebucks, and the Humes make such a fuss about—may go to the devil. O'Connell is quite right to retire from the discussion of such nonsense in St. Stephen's, and all the hypocrites who engage in them, and stir up a revolution in Ireland. It is for these reasons that I am glad to hear that O'Connor has proposed a union with him—a real union between the two countries for a common object.

THEORY OF REGULAR GRADATION.

XXXVII.

(Mammalia concluded.)

As regards the arterial system, some remarkable peculiarities are observed in the branches arising from the arch of the aorta. Thus, in the horse, the camel, and many of the long-necked mammalia, this great trunk just after its origin divides into two branches, one becomes the descending aorta, the other ascends vertically, and divides into a right innominata (innominatum, parts which have no proper name), a left subclavian and a left carotid (to induce sleep, arteries of the head and neck, when tied, the animal becomes comatose, or are said to cause the appearance of being asleep), which latter appears in the direction of the continuation of the trunk. In the elephant there is but one coronary artery, and both carotids arise by a common trunk between the two subclavians.

The dolphin has an innominata on each side, this constitutes the type of the cheiroptera (bats). In the marmot and guinea-pig, the right innominata gives rise to the two carotids, and the right subclavian. This also is the type of the order quadrumana, and most of the carnivora. Among the peculiarities in the distribution of arteries we may notice the rete mirabile (wonderful net) formed by the internal carotid at its entrance into the cranium in several carnivora and ruminant bisulca (cloven-footed ruminants); the plexiform (twisted) arrangement of arteries which exists under the pleuræ and between the ribs in the cetacea; and the remarkable anastomosing division of the arteries of the extremities and tail in the slow-

moving and climbing animals, as the bradypus, myrmecophaga, pangolin, and stenops. This condition of the arterial system doubtless has reference to the peculiar living-habits of the animals it exists in, thus in the cetaceans these serpentine vessels constitute so many reservoirs for containing arterial blood during the obstructions to the circulation which are almost inseparably connected with the aquatic habits of these mammalia, whilst in those with depending heads, the rete mirabile is admirably calculated to obviate the injurious effects of sudden influxes to the brain, and in the edentata the arterial divisions alluded to are no less indicated, lest the large trunks of the extremities should suffer from pressure during their long continued action in climbing.

The plexiform disposition, which characterises so many parts of the arterial system, is no less strikingly displayed in the venous. This is well seen in the tortuous sinuses which receive the intercostal (between the ribs) veins in the porpoise, the vena azygos (a term applied to any part not having a corresponding part) being absent in this animal. A beautiful distribution of veins, constituting the rete mirabile venosum, is met with on the foot of the horse, where these vessels run in innumerable parallel branches on the anterior surface of the coffin bone. Another peculiarity in this system is presented by the inferior cava, in the porpoise, the seal, the common and the sea otter, consisting in a considerable dilatation of this vessel between the liver and the diaphragm, similar to what is observed in tortoises and diving birds.

A general review of the vascular system indicates that the heart in its simplest form resembles a vessel endowed with contractility, as exemplified by the vessel-like multiple hearts which constitute the vascular trunks of the annelides, the contractile trunks on the alimentary canal of the holothuria, the dorsal vessel of insects, &c. *In the embryo of the highest warm-blooded animals the heart is at first tubular, and it is interesting to observe, that during the progress of its development it passes through, and resembles the several forms which constitute its permanent type in the adult state of fishes and reptiles, even the clefts in the neck, with the arched divisions of the aortic trunk, which are persistent in reptiles, may be seen in the human embryo at a very early stage of its development, and the ductus arteriosus, which is single in mammalia, but double in birds, is the last of those arches which remains unclosed in the fœtus.* These arches may be well seen by inspecting the embryo of a bird on the third day of incubation.

The frequency of the heart's action varies

much in different animals, and even in the human subject, from a variety of causes.

In a fish it beats in a minute from	20 to 24
In the frog, about	60
In birds, from	100—140
In the bat,	200
In rabbits,	120
In the cat,	110
In the dog,	95
In the sheep,	75
And the horse,	40
In the human embryo,	150
At birth,	130 to 140
During the first year,	115—130
During the second year,	100—115
During the third year,	90—100
During the seventh year,	85—90
About the fourteenth year,	80—85
In the middle period of life,	70—75
In old age,	50—65

Recapitulation of the organs of circulation in mammalia:—The systemic circulation was discovered by Harvey in 1619. In the higher radatia a large artery surrounds the beginning of the alimentary canal, in the form of a ring, from which the systematic branches arise. A distinct heart is first seen in the crustacea. In the gasterapodous mollusca, as the snail, the rectum passes through the heart. There is no portal circulation in the invertebrata. The heart of a fish consists of a single auricle and ventricle, and the blood of the porta is distributed to the liver and kidneys. All the amphibia have at first the single heart of a fish, but the caducibranchiate species terminate life with the double heart of a reptile. The heart of birds consists of four distinct compartments, as in the mammalia, but rather more perfect, owing to the existence of its fleshy valves. The heart of the higher warm-blooded mammalia, even that of man, in the course of its development, represents the several grades which constitute the permanent types of the lower animals.

In the entire of this class there is great similarity in the respiratory organs, not only to each other but to the human type of formation. An ephiglottis exists in all, and is divided at its superior extremity in the seal, the hare, and the ant-eater. The larynx in all the mammalia consists of the same parts generally as in man, but occasionally modified in obedience to particular circumstances. Thus, in the cetacea this organ ascends as far as the posterior nares, and communicates with the spouting hole, which opens at the top of the head by a single or double orifice, closed by a fleshy valve in the form of two semicircles. The great size of the larynx in the lion accounts for the powerful and terrific roar of that animal. The peculiar grunting voice of the pig is produced by large lateral cavities

communicating with the small ventricles of the larynx, and the neighing of the horse results from the vibrations of membranous folds connected with the chordæ vocales.

The trachea varies considerably in the length, breadth, and number of its rings; thus, in the seal, the porpoise, the cheiroptera, and several roentia, its rings form complete circles as in birds; their number varies from 14, presented by the mouse, to 78 as seen in the seal. In the sloth the trachea descends considerably in the chest, and again ascends to divide into the bronchi. The lungs present very few varieties in the class mammalia. In the cetacea they are remarkable for their elongated, flattened form, and for the free communication of their cells with each other.

Recapitulation of the organs of respiration in mammalia:—The respiratory apparatus is very extensive and greatly varied in the invertebrata, in the lowest orders of which it is usually confined to the surface of the body. Respiration is performed by gills in fishes, and in the caducibranchiate amphibia, during their tadpole state; in the siren and proteus it is in all probability performed all through life both by gills and lungs. In birds this system is extended into the bones and into the large cells of the thorax and abdomen. The organs of respiration throughout the class mammalia, are very similar to those of man.

EPISTLES—NOT PAUL'S

II.

WE have seen George Jacob Holyoake more honest, open, straight-forward, and more innocent than Jesus Christ. We see the very enemy, Sir James Graham, like another Pilate, declare in his favour. Nevertheless, the chief-priests, pharisees, and people of Cheltenham still pressed their charges against him, and sought his condemnation. They appealed to the bigotted passions of a jury, and judge Erskine says it is for the jury to decide his guilt or not. Like the fickle mob, or those in the priests' interest at Jerusalem, the shopkeepers in Cheltenham, and farmers about, before the bare question is put to them, are ready to cry out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him, crucify him."

Jesus complains that they did not take him when he had made himself responsible to justice, and when they were afraid, if the evangelists report, of the consequences if they attempted to seize him in the midst of the multitude he had brought with him into the city. It was not to be expected when they had been bullied by him at the head of his rabble, when they had remonstrated with him on their incendiary and revolutionary

cries, and had got for an answer that the stones themselves would cry out if the multitude were silent (perhaps a menacing appeal in the oriental style of allegory, the only way we know they have of speaking)—that they would come out against him without swords and staves. It was not to be expected that when an ass and the foal of an ass were missing, when the furnished apartment had perhaps been unpaid for, when he had upset the tables of the money-changers, and some property was of necessity lost and spoiled, besides the assault and battery committed on the persons of their fellow-citizens—that they would not come out against him as a thief. It was not to be expected when he had shown such violence in the temple, and when he had two swords, that they would come out against him with none. It was scarcely to be expected when he called them thieves, that they would not let him see by implication what they thought of him. Yet Jesus, as if blessed with a happy forgetfulness of his past behaviour, exclaims, "Be ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour and the power of darkness." One would infer from previous expressions of Jesus and the conduct of Peter, that could he have screwed up his courage, and had they come out against him without swords and staves, that he would have trusted to his means of defence. But when he finds resistance hopeless he pretends that he did not advise recourse to violence, "Suffer ye thus far. Put up again thy sword unto his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled that *thus it must be*?"

The disciples had heard him just before say to his father, that he had a will of his own as well as himself—moreover, that there was an impossibility that the infallible decrees that they had forged could be revoked; in the terms of heathen philosophy, there was a necessity or fate that thus it must be. Therefore the disciples very properly thought—in spite of Jesus taking them to task and declaring the contrary of his former assertions—that there was no use knocking at the doors of heaven—he had put his words to the proof and the doors were not opened, and therefore it was necessary for them to take to their heels. Had the angels been able to come, it would have been all unnecessary, his own agony and the agony of an officer without his ear, throwing away money for swords, and would have made it an act of suicide his not saving himself. Such cowardice contrasted with the calm resignation of his disciples, sleeping on the eve of

battle, their intrepidity in the morning amid his vacillation of conduct and language, then to be snubbed at when they risked their lives for him, made it quite excusable in them, browbeaten as they were, to forsake him and fly.

We have before observed, George Jacob Holyoake did not try to screen himself behind his followers—he does not go to the potteries or collieries near, with a population like those of Galilee, and have them ready in attendance on his lectures, and excite them by his language and overt acts to violence—nor does he frighten out of their propriety the magistracy of Cheltenham, like those of Jerusalem. No, they are under no intimidation, and therefore they act towards George Jacob Holyoake before accusation or trial with great irregularity, which means illegally, and with unnecessary harshness. Jesus acknowledged that the magistracy and authorities had long patiently borne with his offences, they had, in fact, objected, reasoned, prayed him to desist, and even tried to dine-him-off—as newspaper critics are from ill-natured remarks on books and theatres. He pursued his course, until he fell like a rotten apple from the tree into the hands of his opponents. The magistracy of Cheltenham did not wait a moment, but before trial treated George Jacob Holyoake with those irregularities and that severity, which, notwithstanding their preceeding mildness, the magistrates of Jerusalem are charged by Christ's own reporters, only to have used and suffered to be done to him after his condemnation. No, Jesus could not complain, but well might George Jacob Holyoake exclaim, "You treat me as a thief, sending your constable with his staff to carry me away—without trial or conviction you handcuff me with irons, and would have obliged me to walk to Gloucester, had I not met with a friend, who lent me money to pay my fare and the fare of your myrmidons—[as Jesus encountered Simon the Cyrenian, who bore his cross]. Have I done anything but endeavour to instruct you?—elsewhere and at other times you might have seized me and others for the same offence, and in teaching other things. Was it any fault to use freedom of opinion in answering a question for the sincerity of which I and a thousand others now, and the writings of many long ago, might be made amenable to your justice?" Well might George Jacob Holyoake, speaking of their conduct to him, have finished in the words of Jesus, "This is your hour and the power of darkness." George Jacob Holyoake might have said, "I was daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold of me," for he was high-priest to the *Oracle of Reason*. George Jacob Holyoake therefore published, and no doubt uttered, many more indictable blasphemies than the

one produced. There were probably many false witnesses who could swear to several apparent realities of this description. Nevertheless his accusers and judges, in scripture language, seem to have found none, and though at last three false witnesses are said to be in the printing-office, who could prove what was said at the lecture, yet they had the decency to bring forward only one false witness. The chief-priests, and elders, and all the council sought false witness, and many false witnesses came against Jesus. Though the evangelists report they found none, the chief priests, elders, and all the council were probably of a different opinion to the disciples, and when Jesus Christ had committed so many violations of the law, these witnesses had probably other charges to make than the ridiculous one mentioned. Yet the chief-priests, and elders, and all the council had the decency to produce two false witnesses to substantiate that one statement against Jesus. Our judges seem to think one false witness sufficient, though the statute of William on blasphemy requires the oath of two or more credible witnesses. However, Holyoake's case was transferred by the thimble-riggery of the law from statute to common law. W. J. B.

THE FREE INQUIRER'S WHY AND BECAUSE.

WRITTEN BY CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

XVI.

WHY are brutes said to reason?

Because that they think is past doubt, and, as before observed, the act of thinking is the act of reasoning, which, if allowed, seems to settle the question. But theological metaphysicians, who have a special interest in making it appear that inferior animals cannot reason, and rave rather than reason themselves, will admit the premises yet deny the conclusions, that is, they will admit that animals, dogs, for example, think—they will yet further admit that thinking is reasoning, but like crane-necked carriages, turn in the smallest possible compass to get away from the conclusion. To be weak is to be miserable and suffering—now all strength lies in the right use of reason, it is true the madman has sometimes more physical force than the sane man, but such strength is real weakness to the individual and to his species. Man, measured physically, is inferior to brutes, he has neither the strength of the tiger or the lion, the agility of the ape, nor the swiftness of the fox, nor the greyhound, yet, as he is better organised to receive sensations, and has the faculty of reason to an incalculably greater extent, he is enabled to triumph and hold dominion over the beasts of the forest, the fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea, and thereby enjoy a larger, and

as his reason advances, an indefinitely increasing amount of happiness. As observed by some one, if the horse knew his strength, what man would care to be his rider? Human beings have, besides, this great advantage, they are progressive, which the inferior creatures are not, at least to any considerable extent—for although it be admitted that each animal acquires a certain amount of experience, during its short span of existence, such experience perishes with the individual animal, so that however cunning the individuals of a species may be, the species itself remains the same, and each animal has to begin anew, and collect all its knowledge for itself, so that, if we allow what has been insisted upon, namely, that they have a language peculiar to themselves, and are capable of transmitting their thoughts to each other, still we have the clearest possible evidence that they are not able to hand down the results of their experience to those that come after them.

Why is instinct considered apart and distinct from reason?

Because by instinct is meant those appetites and tendencies, inseparable from the organisation of all living creatures, belonging to each animal, bird, fish, or insect, as one of a kind or species. For example, the original organic tendency which leads the lion-ant to dig a pit-fall for its prey, or the beaver to construct its house upon strict mathematical principles. The instinct in both these cases is natural, as they have it anterior to all experience, while reason is an acquirement and therefore artificial. The desires in human beings to eat, drink, preserve themselves, and propagate their species, are instinctive and indestructible, except by the destruction of the organisation in which they reside—but to note the differences, or similarities of things, as to observe the point of agreement in two foxes, or to compare a panther with a wolf, and note their differences, are acts of reason, which we learn to perform—as before observed, or artificial intellectuality, grafted upon the original instincts. The non-gratification of the instinctive feelings always produces mischief and a premature death. The instinct of thirst, if not complied with, makes the victims of it suffer the most excruciating torments, and if not attended to, will destroy the stoutest constitution in a few days—hunger is next in importance, and is well known to be fatal to all who have not the power to gratify it—for so horrible is a state of starvation considered, that few, however bare and full of wretchedness, will voluntarily suffer it—yet it is an undoubted fact, that hundreds are annually starved out of existence in this enlightened country. The instinct of fear, which seems absolutely necessary to the conservation of the species,

at all events in a state of wildness and barbarism, when men were compelled to contend for existence itself, with wolves, tigers, and lions, then the masters of the earth, is greatly modified by education, which is hinted at by Bacon in his fine “*Essay on Death*,” where he says, “It is worthy the observing, that there is no passion in the mind of man so weak, but it mates and masters the fear of death—and, therefore, death is no such terrible enemy, when a man hath so many attendants about him that can win the combat of him. Revenge triumphs over death—love slights it—honour aspireth to it—grief flieth to it—fear preoccupieth it—nay, we read after Otho, the emperor had slain himself, pity (which is the tenderest of affections) provoked many to die out of mere compassion to their sovereign—and as the truest sort of followers.” This instinctive tendency to conserve ourselves, to avoid all that is injurious or painful, and search after all that is beneficial or pleasurable, is better known by the term self-love, sometimes contemptuously styled selfishness, of which Pope thus speaks in his “*Essay on Man*.”

Two principles in human nature reign,
Self-love to urge, and reason to restrain.

Again he observes :

Modes of self-love the passions we may call
'Tis real good, or seeming moves them all.

What is so angrily and bitterly stigmatised as selfishness, is but the principle of self-love, misdirected and turned into improper channels—self-love, or that affection of the mind which leads us to avoid the evil and choose the good, is the only principle which conserves us from destruction, this is the use of the instinct—but the abuse of it is selfishness, that most hateful feeling, engendered by our errors and our wants, which have hitherto hindered us from understanding that

Man, like the generous vine, supported lives,
The strength he gains is from the embrace he gives.

The Indian philosopher who coolly made a bonfire of himself, seemingly with no other object in view than to astonish Alexander and his army, had probably no less of self-love than others, who would never dream of committing so mad an act, but then it was stifled and overpowered by a load of vanity. Those priests of the catholic church, who conscientiously abstained from all sexual intercourse, lashed and mortified the flesh, and succeeded in subduing the instinct, and keeping what they called their unruly desires in subjection, did not prove that they destroyed the inclination, or that they loved pain or hated pleasure—on the contrary, their whole lives

prove that there was a never-ceasing contest between the flesh and the spirit, or, as we should say, the natural desires and the most unnatural restrictions. None have displayed more of selfishness than your ascetics and reputed saints, for their self-love was so ill-directed as to outrage common sense, thereby inflicting upon themselves and those dupes within the sphere of their influence certain misery, and were only sustained in their insanity by feelings strongly compounded of policy, vanity, and most hateful superstition. The inferior animals have the same instinctive tendencies as human beings, but the great difference between them seems to lie in this, that whereas in human beings, by judicious training, we are enabled to give this law to instinct, "make the blood tame, humble, and wait upon the judgment," in brutes the instinct always seems to predominate. The singular fidelity of dogs, who never betray their masters, nor favour those they love not, is well known, but it is not a reasoning fidelity, and rather proceeds from habit than choice, properly so called, at all events, they seem to have no power to compare the virtues or the vices of their owners, as it is notorious that some of the most faithful dogs love those most who treat them with the greatest harshness and cruelty. The fawning of a spaniel upon the hand that wantonly inflicts pain upon it, is matter of daily observation, which fact has given rise to a proverb very injurious to the reputation of the female sex, that women are like spaniels, as the more they are beaten the more loving and faithful they prove. The instincts above enumerated, we have in common with the leopard, the tiger, the lamb, the eagle, and the finny tribes—in fact, all that has life—even plants eat, drink, perpetuate their species, nay, some are supposed to receive sensations, as for example, the well-known sensitive plant, which shrinks from the touch, as though to conserve itself. We have before observed, that the inferior creatures collect experiences, and unquestionably many elephants are more knowing than their keepers. The latter animal and the dog are reputed to approach nearer than other quadrupeds to the nature of human beings. The elephant, we are told, is the only animal that, besides man, feels *ennui*, or disgust—the dog the only quadruped that has been taught to speak, or that dreams, while he and the elephant share this peculiar advantage that they understand looks. We often hear talking parrots, without much astonishment, but a talking dog would be a curiosity. Leibnitz speaks of a hound somewhere in Saxony, that could utter distinctly with tolerable emphasis and discretion, no fewer than thirty words—but even this wonderful dog had but a very small number

of ideas, and little, if any, power of abstraction, seemingly knowing nothing of his relations to his kind, or those sympathies which endear human beings to each other, and form the sweetest solace of existence.

PROVINCIAL PROGRESS.

THE pleasant town of Northampton contains many persons publicly distinguished for enthusiasm, honesty, and liberality. Upon a recent visit, I was not a little amused at the trouble taken and ingenuity exercised to draw christian parties into discussion on disputed topics. This conduct on the part of sincere sceptics was strongly contrasted by the taciturn behaviour, and cautious evasions of the religious. The sceptic earnestly seeks investigation—the pious shuns it. By this course, the godly unwittingly pay to scepticism a high tribute, and volunteer to it a proud triumph.

It is now a rare thing to draw a well-informed christian into discussion. Only the simple and the sincere will risk it. In a provincial city, I lately seduced a plain, earnest dissenter to discuss the question—"Whether his own superstition or that of the church of England was the greater." By this arrangement he was to lay low the foundations of churchism, and I was to level the superstructure of dissent. The work of demolition was to go bravely on. But his more wary friends came round and withdrew the proposition of their silly advocate.

The Rev. Mr. Hales, wesleyan minister, lately delivered a sermon in the wesleyan chapel, Northampton. His text was that verse in which a prophet likens his people to a "cake untuned." The rev. orator said, "Now, my brethren, a cake untuned means a cake half-baked. Now, I mean to say, that *christians are cakes half-baked*. I say again," hallooed the rev. speaker, "*that christians are cakes half-baked*." This gentleman soon after preached the same sermon at Bugbrook, a village a few miles from Northampton, and again displayed this rhetorical figure to his, I suppose, half-baked audience. I think Mr. Hales is right. His language would be called coarse, but I do not think it inapplicable to his hearers. The men who can sit from week to week, to imbibe the degrading prejudices and erroneous views of methodism, or any other form of the christian religion, are not unworthy the *elegant* designation of "half-baked cakes." G. J. H.

LIBRARY OF REASON.

On July 1, will be Published No. 3,
containing

THE LIFE OF SPINOZA.

THE ORACLE OF REASON.

THE UNBELIEVER'S CREED,

According to Christians.

I BELIEVE that there is no god, but that matter is god and god is matter, and that it is no matter whether there is any god or no.

I believe that the world was not made, that the world made itself, that it had no beginning, that it will last for ever, world without end.

I believe that man is a beast, that the soul is the body, and the body the soul, and that after death there is neither soul nor body.

I believe that there is no religion that natural religion is the only religion, and that all religion is unnatural.

I believe not in Moses—I believe not in the First Philosophy—I believe in Chubb, Collins, Toland, Tindal, Morgan, Mandeville, Hobbes, Shaftesbury—I believe in Lord Bolingbroke, Hume, Voltaire, Diderot, Bonlangier, Volney, and Paine—I believe not in St. Paul.

I believe not revelation—I believe in tradition—I believe in the Talmud—I believe in the Koran—I believe not in the Bible. I believe in Socrates—I believe in Confucius—I believe in Sanconiaton—I believe in Mahomet—I believe not in Christ.

THE UNBELIEVER'S CREED,

According to Atheists.

I BELIEVE that there is no god, but that matter is matter, and that it *does* matter whether we think there is a god or no.

I believe that the world was not made, therefore could not have made itself, nor been made by anything or nothing else—that it necessarily exists, and as it did not commence, neither will it cease, to be.

I believe that man is "worse and better" than beasts; that the word soul means aggregate of mental phenomena, exhibited by individual human beings—that the body is the body—and that after death there is just as much body as before death—and that the difference between dead and living bodies is one of state, not of fact.

I believe that there are at least a thousand religions all quite true—according to those who are paid to expound them—that natural religion is one of the number, and that all religions are equally natural and equally credible.

I believe in Moses as firmly as in Bacchus—I believe in any *sound* philosophy, first or last—I believe in Chubb, Collins, Toland, Tindal, Morgan, Mandeville, Hobbes, Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, Hume, Voltaire, Diderot, Bonlangier, Volney, Paine, and all other men, Saint Paul of course included—with *weight and measure*.

I not only believe but know what is revealed; though I neither know *nor* believe a true religion has been or is contained in any revelation—I believe so much of tradition as is believable—I believe in the Talmud and the Koran, just as much as I do in the Bible, and I believe in the Bible just as much as I do in the Koran and Talmud—I believe in Socrates, having no reason to disbelieve in him—I believe in Confucius, Sanconiaton, and Mahomet, for the same reason—I believe in Christ, as much as I do in Adonis or Hercules.

Lastly, I believe in all unbelief.

Lastly, I do not believe in any religious belief.

(From the Investigator.)

ENGLISH JUSTICE.

THE criminal law commissioners, in their report on the law of libel, admit there is not such a law as ours to protect religion in the codes of modern Europe. In most countries the law only protects public worship and religious ceremonies from interruption. Such a regulation I think infidels will not object to, as to disturb anything that is allowed, is the same as any other disturbance of the peace. It indeed shows the charity of atheists, their readiness to permit the public expression of religion, when the same latitude is not allowed to the much more important affairs of this world. Did a man choose to toll a bell half-an-hour before breakfast, dinner, and supper, we think he would be indicted by his neighbours for a nuisance. There are many other observances, particularly in roman catholic countries, that if they were practised in the affairs of life, at the caprice of individuals, or any bodies of individuals, would soon fall under some law, or have some law made to suppress the nuisance. An officer in the English service stationed at Malta, ensign Maclachlan, was on duty when the host was passing along the streets. Now, in all countries where I have been, the tinkling of a bell announces its coming, and sometimes the chaunting of priests or singing of girls. As it produces profound silence amongst the people who are worshippers, and all common business is suspended—a great body of people bearing canopies and banners passing along with their peculiar sacred noises, on the other hand—it is rather incredible to believe that an individual at an open window did not hear it. This Maclachlan was sitting over his wine, and pelted the whole procession, and the good god himself, with walnut-shells and orange-peel. He was tried according to the laws of all countries, not only for insulting, but for attacking, *vi et armis*, god himself—no spiritual nonentity, but a real bit of bread—and the ministers of religion. He is condemned to six months' imprisonment. The papers in this country are in a fury, abuse god in the wafer, call out not only for the release of the officer, which they get, but for the punishment of his judges. It is really no use for us, who, for uttering a word, or writing against religion, or merely denying its utility, are condemned to much longer imprisonments, accompanied with fines, to reason with the gentlemen of the press, the lawgivers, or the executive of this country. We can only hope they may be cured of their lamentable blindness, which prevents them seeing an object straight before them.

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Saturday, June 10, 1843.

THE ORACLE OF REASON: Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

“FAITH’S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE”

First Editor—Charles Southwell, imprisoned for twelve months and fined £100, for Blasphemy in No. 4.
Second Editor—George Jacob Holyoake, imprisoned for six months, for Blasphemy.
Third Editor—Thomas Paterson, imprisoned for one month, for Blasphemous Placards.
Vendors—George Adams, imprisoned for one month for selling No. 4; and Harriet Adams, his wife, arrested for selling No. 25.

No. 79.]

[PRICE 1D.

EPISTLES—NOT PAUL’S

III.

WE called, in our last, the witnesses against George Jacob Holyoake false witnesses, according to the scripture sense in prosecutions for blasphemy. Those against Jesus gave evidence of what he *did* say and were called false. The false witnesses against Jesus Christ, could scarcely be blamed for taking the literal meaning of his words, as neither they nor his disciples could know their proper interpretation until the resurrection had unravelled the riddle. Nor did the witness against Holyoake anymore, as we term it, perjure himself, yet, as we have shown, George Jacob Holyoake’s expressions admit of more meanings than one, therefore, according to bible precedent, Bartram and all who spoke or could speak to *their* ideas of truth, but not Holyoake’s, were false witnesses, all who could not foresee what possible interpretation, in the course of time, his words might take, were false witnesses.

If the chief priests, elders, and all the council interpreted the evidence of these two false witnesses, and if the latter brought it forward as blasphemy, they all might justly be accused of bearing false witness against their prisoner. If we take the indictment as the interpretation of George Jacob Holyoake’s words, and as such sanctioned by accusers, witness, judge, and jury, we may literally accuse them of bearing false witness. More, we may charge them with a wilful perversion of the expressions, acts, and intentions of George Jacob Holyoake. It was bearing false witness against him, prejudging the case, and the minds of his judges, to say George Jacob Holyoake was “a wicked, malicious, and evil-disposed person.” Such was the language in which Jesus Christ addressed the Jews, but not the language which the Jews used to Jesus when he was put upon his trial, “Disregarding the laws and religion of the realm and violating the laws of this kingdom.” We have to learn whether any law defines the nature of the divinity; neither the religion

of the country, the church, the creeds, not even the athanasian, prevents the people declaring for or against matter or spirit. The theologians nor the legislature have not yet settled what the divine nature is, nor could the judge lay down the law as to what thing it is, nor the sapient grand jury at Gloucester find a true bill, nor the twelve wise men in the jury-box make up their minds in this matter. We have learned that the laws and religion of this country are disregarded and violated by using a figure of speech to recommend the appropriation of the property of the church to the necessities of the nation. Such everybody knows has been the course in every christian land, even in the pope’s dominions, when the state has become poor and in want of money. The government of this country may already be said to have put the deity on half-pay, when they reduced the salaries of the bishops. We have now learnt that to assert or dissent to a metaphysical opinion, or to object to the laws or constitution of this country subjects us to a prosecution. Such a principle of finality would stop for ever the wheels of government, and would extinguish the most important branch of the sciences, as Hume terms the study of religion and politics. If there be any meaning in the word atheist, such would be the person who put an end to the vague idea each man has of a divinity, filled up that metaphysical vacuum in men’s brain, turned a nothing into something, an unmeaning generality into a common place individuality. There would be no more gods for god-fanciers then. Such an atheist, was Christ, who said—according to those who have interpreted his enigmatical language, and given us a belief—that he was god. In such a sense the early christians were called atheists by the pagans, as the belief in a man could not be reconciled by them to a belief in a god. In this sense christians are atheists against the second commandment, where Moses has tried to remove all pretence for a deity, to cover his nothingness, to close the avenue of every sense that would come to a knowledge of him, and every element that might be construed into a confession of him. Human

beings could not have descended lower in the scale of superstition, atheism, and idolatry, when they took for a deity a felon on a tree, and make the instrument of his punishment the emblem of their worship. It would be the same thing to make Good and the gallows our god. The adoption of such a divinity would have so far reason and prophecy in its favor, that good is derived from the Saxon word god. In oracular terms, his fate was prefigured and predestined, though, like Jesus Christ, he did not see it clearly till the last (looking through a glass but darkly), that when he wooed the butcher his love would lead to the executioner. He stole a pair of breeches, it was said, one for one leg and one for the other, like Jesus Christ two donkeys to support his under-standers, and neither, strange to say, were heard of ever afterwards. Like his prototype, he escaped his pursuers, passed a long agony, and though he had shown much resolution in committing offences, exhibited a want of courage in bearing the consequences. A reward was offered for his apprehension, and one who had known him delivered him up to justice. The officers did not keep to the law in the discovering of the crime which led to his apprehension, nor were the demands of justice fully and legally satisfied in having no witness to prove the identity of the woman. He was put to death, asserting his innocence, and nobody doubting his guilt. A few condoled with him, the wife of the chief magistrate of London, like the spouse of Pilate, the governor of the city, displayed an interest in his situation. Some visited him, those Nicodemus's who are to be found in every land, who go secretly under the shadow of the night to see every novelty, however revolting. The Duke of Sussex, like Herod, sat upon the bench. There were those rich men, who, like Joseph of Arimathea, wish to be in at the death, and do something at the end. The mob hooted and insulted him. All which was abiding by precedent in the great sacrifice offered up for mankind.

George Jacob Holyoake could not be said to have "Wickedly and profanely devised and intended to bring almighty god, the holy scriptures, and the christian religion into disbelief and contempt among the people of this kingdom." He could not well do so, men's minds not being made up as to what god is—whether Jesus Christ or another—an essence, three making one or one three—whether a father, or a son, or an hermaphrodite, if he can produce out of himself. Physically and morally it is impossible to bring nothing, which George Jacob Holyoake terms it, into disbelief and contempt. George Jacob Holyoake does not mention the holy scriptures. According to the Jews who were the authors, rightful owners, and

guardians, and must best know the sense of the old testament, the holy scriptures are disbelieved and condemned by all christians. They say (who are the best judges) that it is to disbelieve and condemn the holy scriptures, as Jesus Christ did, to teach him, and makes us guilty of the blasphemy, and really indictable for the offence of bringing the almighty god of the old testament and the holy scriptures into disbelief and contempt. The mohammedans, who do not reject the old testament, agree with the Jews. Mohamet struck with horror at the blasphemy of the christians, speaks of them, and their belief thus in the koran, "It was enough to make the earth split and the heavens crack to think of giving god a son." Certainly our ridicule of the old testament, by making types and prophecies, whole sentences, sometimes half sentences, and disconnected words, any history or any description, like the song of Solomon, apply to Christ, brings the holy scriptures into contempt and disbelief. George Jacob Holyoake, therefore, did not bring the holy scriptures into disbelief and contempt, but would rather have restored them to their original purpose, by upsetting the Cheltenham deity, and those who profess to be in his pay. As to the christian religion, men are equally uncertain as to what that is. Can it be said that George Jacob Holyoake by some indefinable words, which are not attempted to be explained by his accusers, brings that which does not exist into disbelief and contempt? People may say they believe in the phoenix, or a man rising from the dead, though not a matter of fact, yet such an idea might be entertained by our senses, and their abstract result, thought or mind. But how can a man believe that which he cannot understand, which is not in the course of experience, which is not recognizable by the senses, which is in absolute contradiction to them, and therefore cannot be conceived? Which is not, as they say, merely inconceivable to our finite intelligence, as the idea of eternity may be, but deprives us of the reason we have, stops the march of intellect, and bids us retrogress in absurdity to arrive at the heights of heavenly perfection, and exchange fallible humanity for the infallible imbecility of angelic natures. How then can George Jacob Holyoake bring into disbelief what is not really believed? Equally difficult is it to bring, what is not a reality into contempt, as it is to say, what the contempt is, or who produces it. We have shown that the professors of christianity are more liable to the charge of bringing the holy scriptures and the christian religion into ridicule and contempt. We may add, that the judge and jury of Gloucester, magistrates and clergy of Cheltenham, law officers of the crown and secretary of state,

are those who were really guilty of bringing law and religion into contempt and disbelief by blasphemy prosecutions. The subject matter of the accusation against Holyoake rather goes to rescue the argument of god from contempt by depriving people of their things or idols, and priests of their practice. We rather think the contempt is that of persons, which to hit anything tangible must be levelled at them, and effects them in their most sensitive parts, their purses. For George Jacob Holyoake does not mention the christian religion, but those who take money under fraudulent pretences, and receive full pay on account of the unknown. Certainly George Jacob Holyoake did not use force and arms, nor can his answer to the emissary of the inquisition be possibly twisted into a recommendation of their use. But Jesus did use force and arms instigate others to their use, and cause them to be used by others.

THE SOCIALIST GOD.

Robert Owen has expressly told us he believes that fire, or natural electricity, is the great incomprehensible power that rules all things—by which the atom is moved, and the aggregate of nature governed.—*London Phalanx*, No. 12.

THIS is very funny! I have often wondered what was that notable "Power that directs the atom and controls the aggregate of nature." My object in this article is to furnish the bewildered reader with a glossary of this famous phrase.

In 1839, the socialists of B. put out an address, the production, I believe, of a missionary, who is somewhat celebrated for throwing a *light* upon his subjects. The address repudiates certain calumnies circulated about the said socialists of B. This is all very proper, but they repudiate these calumnies, for what reason, think you, reader? This is it. "We think it a duty we owe to that power that directs the atom and controls the aggregate of nature, and whose laws we profess to follow." Which may be read thus, "We think it a duty we owe to electricity, whose modes of attracting and repelling particles we profess to follow." When I first read the declaration of the socialists, I thought it very sublime, because I could not understand it. I like it much better with the explanation I have suggested.

But the address of the socialists of B. abounds in theological riches. It says—"We will stand up in defence of that being whose bountiful goodness hath spread earth's lap with plenty—whose infinite wisdom hath endowed man with faculties capable of extending improvement—whose benevolent and almighty power hath so arranged the external world, that for man to

be happy all within the sphere of his influence must be happy also. If it be the *desire of this power* to continue this our existence beyond this life, we throw ourselves entirely on *his* protection." This paragraph is almost beneath comment. If the great being in question, is but half as great as he is represented, what ridiculous folly is it in the socialists of B. to pretend to stand up in his defence? It is like the herring standing up in defence of the whale—or the butterflies spreading out their wings to protect us. It is a perfect piece of christian impudence. Socialists ought to know better. Then, if *infinite* wisdom endowed man with his faculties, he would not be found in possession of faculties for calumniating well meaning socialists of B. If benevolent *almighty* power arranged the world, the evil which socialism professes to remove would never have existed. *Infinite* wisdom, and infinite power and benevolence could have managed these matters better. But read the paragraph on the improved plan. "We will stand up in defence of *fire, whose goodness* hath spread earth's lap—*whose infinite wisdom* hath endowed man with great faculties, and whose benevolent and almighty power hath arranged the world so nicely. If it be the desire of electricity to continue our existence beyond this life, we throw ourselves entirely on electricity's protection." Can absurdity farther go? Who ever before heard of fire being wise, good, and benevolent? or of electricity desiring our existence beyond this life? O darling electricity! I am afraid that they who "throw themselves on thy protection," will have a SHOCK-ing reception.

It will, perhaps, be said that the socialists of B. had not Mr. Owen's notion. Had they any other as plausible? Mr. Owen's notion is the most plausible extant. Upon the subject of deity the most plausible ideas are absurd. The question is unfathomable by reason.

Mr. Owen's own rational religion declares this "Power to be incomprehensible, and that no facts yet known to man declare its nature." If it is incomprehensible, which I do not doubt, how came Mr. Owen to find out that it was electricity? If "No facts yet known to man inform us what the nature of that power is," what did the socialists of B. mean by their "duty" to that power about which, as socialists, they confessed, in their rational religion, that they knew nothing?

It will be asked, why rake up from 1839, our crotchety notions of deity? Because we have not yet wholly advanced beyond them. This week I have received from the socialists of C. an address worthy only to be set by the side of the address of the socialists of B.

If practical measures are to be our aim, as socialists, we ought only to talk of practical things. The gods we should leave to those who can afford to be crazy, and who can endure to be useless.

It was objected to me by the secretary of the Worcester branch, a shrewd freethinker, that if man could believe in a barren god, and perform the duties of morality, such a belief might be taught—it would not so much oppose prejudice as atheism, and would answer the same purpose. To this I answered, that though I knew many believers in a barren god who were good practical atheists, it appeared to me that their morality was the result of accident, rather than design. That their virtues were owing to excellence of disposition, rather than clearness of conception. Such men rarely knew, at least, rarely admitted, that they were practical atheists. They call themselves religious. He who, being moral, styles himself religious, assists in the bewilderment of mankind, who ought to be enabled always to see the wide distinction between religion and morality. I think that the most careful believer in a barren god is influenced for the worse by his belief. The idea is unphilosophical. A single error is pernicious. The belief in a deity is an error of cardinal magnitude. For this reason I could not advocate the belief of the abstractest conception of deity. It would be in my opinion, advocating a lie. Besides, that which is not to influence human conduct is useless. If a man is uninfluenced by the belief in a deity, he does not want one—and if he is influenced by such belief, he is no longer a practical atheist—he is no longer strictly moral. Lastly—the christian world are influenced for the worse by their belief in deities. I know no shorter way of effecting their conversion, than by showing that such belief is unfounded in reason.

G. J. H.

OXFORD THEOLOGY.

IV.

DR. DAVID FREDERIC STRAUSS wrote his great work against christianity, called "The Life of Jesus; or a Critical Examination of his History," on the principle of the mythical interpretation of the scriptures. He showed there could be no historical truth in the four gospels—that all the relations there are allegories or fables, copies of former ones, or illustrations of doctrines made to correspond with a mystical sense given to passages in the old Jew-book. He acknowledges there was nothing new in his mode of attack, the fathers had preceded him in his work of demolition. It is curious, as showing the agreement between infidels and the

Oxford school of theology, which I have given many instances of before. The puseyites, in concert with the fathers, have adopted in common, and to serve different ends, this mythical mode of interpreting the Jew-books. Nothing more confirms the assertions of unbelievers, than the admission, that we can show an uninterrupted succession of christians, from the apostolic ages up to 1843, who did not receive the truths of christianity as facts, but considered them as stories depicting ideas, like Æsop's fables conveying moral precepts. These witnesses have all along perfectly agreed with the infidels, that the whole of christianity was contrary to reason, was not intelligible to human understanding, its difficulties were only to be seen through with the eyes of faith, and by the light of the traditions which have been handed down by those who understood the esoteric, or inward, doctrine contained in the thickest and darkest obscurities. According to them, it is the height of fanaticism to suppose that a man can of himself discover any consequence, anything to believe out of an heterogenous mass of sayings and doings, revolting to reason, contrary to truth, and contradicting each other, when tested by human comprehension, and common-place considerations which are to be found in the gospels. There was an attempt made by the rationalists of Germany to show that the miracles and other extraordinary doings of Jesus, were developments of germs of truth, but Strauss ridiculed their inventions, and the fathers, and their successors the puseyites, at a word, like a miracle of faith, such as was promised in removing a mountain, made the whole structure of christianity dissolve into thin air. The astonished observer looks for what is left, and the only residue is a something, which the magician in divinity finds out had a resemblance, though not there seen or thought of, to that which was represented to the senses. The rationalists of Germany, the Strauss and the Oxford school of theology must have the greatest contempt for the hypocrisy or insanity of those rational religionists, such as the writers in the *Edinburgh Review*, who declare the bible is quite as plain as any other book, and easy of belief, that "Few persons not grossly ignorant or bitterly prejudiced, have ever denied the authority of the bible; and that fewer still have doubted its obvious interpretation upon any material point." (*Edin. Review*, April, 1843, p. 495.) And again, p. 493, "No language can be less ambiguous than that in which the bible states those religious truths which practically concern mankind." Not only must the sincere religious controversialists have the greatest disrespect for such statements and such writers, but the people who know better, and have a sense of justice, must abominate those pre-

tended liberals who refuse to acknowledge admissions made by all parties—who will not come to close quarters with their adversaries, but reply to particulars, pointed out and urged against them, by vague general assertions of agreement in great truths, the fundamental principles, important doctrines, material points. They support these *words* by abusing all those whom they require to have sufficient faith to believe in such verbiage, and who are unwilling to follow what rational religionists do not condescend to explain. To submit to the *ipse dixit* of these despots, would be in reality acknowledging themselves blind in order to be led by blind guides into a ditch. The puseyites honestly address the unbelievers, and say we acknowledge the truth of all your objections, and the only remedy we offer is obedience—faith will come by persevering in it, the mind trained will see into the spiritual meaning of the scriptures, the church will teach it, employing those rules of interpretation which have been handed down from the first ages of christianity to the present time, and give an explanation of those difficulties, otherwise equally incomprehensible to us as to you. “Scriptures are not the sole and abstract rule of faith (they say), tradition is supplemental to it, and that what it unanimously taught was of co-ordinate authority, that a fully developed christianity must be sought out of the contributions of several centuries.” On the contrary, say their wise adversaries, any man at this present time need only look into the book to be convinced, he has need of no other book, or no other person but himself. Many have tried this prescription, and having somewhat the same state of mind as those minds that indited such matter, and supposed it was ever to be taken as real—having minds somewhat similar to such a collection of fantasies, it has resulted in making such individuals mad who have been sent to their Bedlams, or the whole of society for a time have gone mad with them, and fallen into one common fit, in consequence of such reading and believing. The puseyites, to reclaim men from such a vortex of lunacy, and to keep them in the direction of common sense, exclaim, for god’s sake don’t read it, rather read anything else—it does not mean what it says—god almighty has been obliged to keep us in pay ever since, who risk madness and o’ften fall into it, by trusting ourselves to the study, and endeavouring to explain the mysteries of the holy scriptures.

The Edinburgh reviewers need not tell us they will discard reason in the controversy, when they do it by adopting the scriptures as reason, and will use nothing but ridicule and invective against the puseyites. They do not see it all turns against themselves, if there be nothing in common between them and the puseyites, no reason, no sense, no

logic, if sober argument be of no avail, is it not the same between us and the defenders of the Jew-book and christianity? If they say the most legitimate uses of the mind to overthrow error, are of no effect against the absurdities of the Oxford school of theology, may we not in proper precedence say it of the Jew-book—the hydra-headed christianity, and monster faiths issuing out of its perusal—and of those who so totally renounce all common sense as to attempt its literal defence? These fools or hypocrites do not, or pretend not to see, that the ridicule and abuse they employ against the comparatively innocent methods, the humble apologies, amiable interpretations, and useful misrepresentations, which endeavour to account for the fooleries, immoralities, and monstrosities of the Jew book, must tell with a hundred times more effect against these things themselves. Speaking of the disciples of the Oxford tract school, they say, “Their principles, logical and ethical, are so totally different from our own, that we feel it as impossible to argue with them as beings of a different species. There may be worlds, say some philosophers, where truth and falsehood change natures—where the three angles of a triangle are no longer equal to two right angles, and where a crime of unusual turpitude may inspire absolute envy. We are far from saying that the gentlemen above-mentioned are qualified to be inhabitants of such a world; but we repeat, that we have just as little dispute with them as if they were.”

Why go to suppositions and another world, when the case is actually present, in the controversy between us and the rational religionists, or christians? Take the existence of the logical and mathematical error of the trinity—christians say three make one and one makes three—and with such a table of arithmetical calculation, go through their rule of three in the athanasian creed, and swear that therein are contained the great truths, the fundamental doctrines, the material points of the bible and of christianity. Take their ethical or moral proposition, and is not the great doctrine of christianity, as far as we are concerned, is not the whole object of the Jew-book to tell us of unusual turpitude, which inspires absolute envy? That our maker condemned us all to death for eating an apple, besides several minor punishments in the lives of all individuals, and all sentient beings. That after sometimes amusing himself with torturing the whole of mankind, sometimes only a few—in order to let them alone, he got a man’s wife with child, among his chosen people, and murdered the issue of this illicit amour. Then, that he broke his promise, and in the fulfilment of his covenant with the Jews, made them ten times worse off, and left the rest of the world much as they

were before. There was only wanting a natural illustration to suit a virgin having a child, and all the miracles of Jesus, to have made this exhibition of christianity and the Jew-book complete. The two given are so completely fitted to christianity, that is, those days of double doctrine, *vulgo* hypocrisis, we cannot resist the conviction, that the writer, under a veil to be withdrawn by the initiated, was attacking the nonsense which he left the vulgar to suppose he was defending. If in earnest, we must say of them, as they say of the puseyites, after reciting, but not answering their ameliorations of the scriptures and christianity—"The powers of speculation of these gentlemen are either so much above our own, or so much below them—their notions of right and wrong so transcendently ridiculous, or so transcendently sublime—that there can be nothing in common between us." Would not this be the fitting language to use to them, which they do throughout the article towards the puseyites, and urge as an excuse for the employment of abuse and ridicule alone, the christian belief.

A miracle, according to the puseyites and the fathers, is not a thing really done, but only what you, through faith, believe to be done—the thing remains the same to the senses, but by words and signs assumes a spiritual meaning. Now this, one would have thought, would have saved the christians many a theological forlorn hope, and desperate defence of some unaccountable folly ever exposed to the merciless extermination of the infidel. But it is made a ground of complaint against the "Men who can so wrest the meaning of common terms as to represent the change effected in the eucharistic elements by the words of consecration, to be as much a miracle as that performed at the marriage feast of Cana—men who are so enamoured of the veriest dreams and whimsies of the fathers, as to bespeak all reverence for that fancy of Justin, and others, that the ass and the colt for which Christ sent his disciples, are to be interpreted severally of the 'Jewish and Gentile believers'—and also to attach much weight to that of Origen, who rather expounds them of 'the old and the new testaments'—men who can treat with gravity the various patriotic expositions of the five barley loaves, which some suppose to indicate the five senses, and others the five books of Moses." Whatever we may think of the gulibility of men who could swallow such a story, as a fact much greater than the powers of digestion of the many thousands who fed on the loaves, and then collected in crumbs more than the originals—whatever we may think of a story intended to throw into the shade the act of a predecessor in imposture, as in nonsense and

improbability it does far exceed the miracle of manna, which Moses said he got god to rain upon the Israelites—yet it has not those objections which the other two miracles present to those not insensible to shame and ridicule, and the impeachment of their divinity's character. We should have thought the christians glad to escape from the charge of a miracle, only related by one evangelist as the first Jesus performed, in which he hoccused the drink of a wedding party, who were already well drunk. The teetotalers and the cold-water curers, I should have thought, would have been so much obliged to an interpretation which showed that Jesus was not really a winebibber, as was reported of him by the Jews, from their gross and literal version of this adventure. The above temperance men might infer from it that cold water, as used by Jesus, served all the physical purposes of wine, as also all the moral and spiritual effects, and in future they might dispense with the juice of the grape, which is a stumbling block to some of the total abstinence partakers at the sacrament table. Water would be more an element—turned into wine would be the primitive miracle—into the blood, would make a still greater sign and wonder, and as apparent as in the preceding case. To crown all, it would make out the trinity—water, wine, and blood. If the fathers were shocked at the immorality of Jesus, which made them give so innocent an interpretation to his debauchery, they were equally struck with the absurd figure which their god cut on the two donkeys. How he could possibly ride on the two has been a puzzle for commentators—did he first ride on one, and then the other, and break the poor foal's back before its parent, in illustration of his own crucifixion, in presence of his father—the mystery of two jack-asses. Or did he ride on both, and make out the triangle trinity complete?—himself the point, the ass and the foal—god and the holy-ghost—at the base. Or did he ride but one animal, and let the foal run after, and take the place of the pigeon, as emblematic of the holy-ghost? I should have thought the rational religionists would have wished to have been helped out of the scrape, but they hug these absurdities, cry out heresy and popery on those who would remove them, and appeal to their belief in them, as the glorious effects of the reformation, the right of private judgment, and the triumph of reason. They say, p. 497, in the *Edinburgh Review*, "We always believed that the ready faith, so much commended by scripture, was the triumph of reason in a candid and humble mind, unresisted by pride, or prejudice, or the delusions of of the fancy. We are persuaded that the keenest, the calmest, and the most purely rational intellect, is pre-

cisely that which is likely to be most strongly impressed by the evidences of the christian religion. We think, in short, that the believer in the bible ought to feel a stronger conviction that he is right, than the believer in the koran or the shaster—and we cannot perceive how he can effect this, while he shrinks from the presumption of exercising his natural faculties on the subject.” Augustine and Origen considered the story of Adam and Eve and the apple, to be an allegory—therefore the fall of man, original sin, and the necessity of a redeemer, the fundamentals, the beginning of the scheme of christianity, were there dispensed with. Other christians disposed of the end and superstructure, and said Christ never came really into the world, or was crucified, it was an illusion. We hear not their opinions given by themselves, but by their enemies—therefore we may safely say that they considered the whole affair a fable, or an allegory, as they denied it all real substance, which we cannot conceive but as the representation of the idea. Having got rid of the two extremities, we have seen how the fathers and the puseyites dispose of the intermediate parts. The above are but a few specimens, there are other known instances, such as baptism, being considered the effect of a moral discourse—and if the fathers and church history were searched, which the *Edinburgh Review* threatens to do, like Jesus’s prophecy of Jerusalem, there would not be one stone left upon another of the whole fabric of christianity. More than that, materials there would be none disjoined and scattered on the ground—the whole would have passed off like a midsummer night’s dream. W. J. B.

PROGRESS OF INFIDELITY IN FRANCE.

“THERE is a very general idea in this country, that religious scepticism is more common in France than with us; and a vague impression, connected for the most part with their mode of observing the festival of Sunday, that the nation is chargeable with a general laxity as to their religious duties. But few, comparatively among us are aware of the extent to which *France has ceased to have a just claim to be classed among christian nations*. We are aware that this is strong and startling language, which ought not to be used unadvisedly. But we are confident that those who are really acquainted with the state of that country, will acknowledge that utter infidelity prevails throughout the educated classed to a fearful extent. Among the rural population, especially in the more remote districts of the south and central parts of France, the forms of the old *superstitions* are still clung to by the peasantry.

But among them *infidelity* advances step by step with *instruction*. Among the female parts of the population, much of religious observance and not a little true piety may be found. But let the reader who doubts the accuracy of our representations in this matter, ascertain by personal observation and inquiry, as we have done in many various parts of the country, how many of the chairs with which the parish churches are furnished are occupied by men. Let him, in his progress through the country, talk on the subject with strangers met at hap-hazard, and hear the philosophically candid and mildly tolerant manner in which a profession of belief in the doctrines of christianity is received, much as a man in this country might listen to an avowal of Joanna Southcotism from a stranger. Let him, above all, consult the mass of the popular literature of the country, and the tone of the periodical press. And if unwilling still to admit into his mind a full belief of *so awful a fact*, he should endeavour to hope that such indices as those referred to may evidence the infidelity of the lighter, more superficial, or more worthless classes only, let him read and weigh the following remarkable and memorable passage. The words are those of the admired, the celebrated, the philosophic, the enlightened Victor Cousin, to whose name France points with pride, when she is reproached in the face of Europe with her Balzacs, her Dumas, and Soulies, and who has repeatedly appeared in the most esteemed and important professional chair in France, the chosen and popular instructor of the flower of her youth. It was as professor of philosophy in the university of Paris, armed with all the authority and weight that that high position and his own great reputation could give, that Victor Cousin, on the 24th of April, in the year 1828, spoke as follows—‘Christianity, gentlemen, is the philosophy of the people. He who now addresses you has sprung from the people and from christianity; and I hope that you will always recognize the fact, in my profound and *tender respect* for all that appertains to the people and to christianity. Philosophy is *patient*. She knows how things have passed in former generations, and she is full of confidence in the future. Happy to see the masses, the people, that is, nearly the whole human race in the arms of christianity, *she contents herself with quietly stretching out to them her hand, and aiding them to raise themselves higher yet.*’

“This is the pseudo christianity that the pupil has derived from the master, Victor Cousin from Schleiermacher, and this the *Foreign Quarterly Review* takes care to tell us was in its glory, ‘When no sacerdotal race existed, no separation of castes, no despotism of such a nature that the free exercise of

mind could be obstructed by its means' (*Foreign Quarterly Review*, No. 59, art. 4. "The Nonveaux Fragments Philosophiques," per Victor Cousin, heads the article). One of the sacerdotal race will give it a little trouble for some time to come. Nor is the *British and Foreign Review* much behind the *Foreign Quarterly*—it has placed Socrates and Christ on a level. In its opening paragraph of the last, No. 28, we find the following—"The school of Socrates and the teaching of Christ—morals and religion—great and venerable names, we desire to do justice to each." Really, how condescending! Man doing justice to him in whom dwelt all the fulness of the godhead bodily!

"And this style of Victor Cousin is precisely the tone that prevails on the subject of christianity among the better sort of the educated classes in France. The reader will perceive that it is entirely different from the scoffing and sneering infidelity of Voltaire and his times. We deem it to be, in its apparent candour, moderation, and calm tolerance, a far more dangerous spirit than its predecessor. Christianity is spoken of with 'tender respect,' as an excellent invention for the dark ages, and indeed very good for the ignorant even of this; but as utterly inapplicable to the condition of those who have emancipated their minds from the old darkness, which rendered such a contrivance necessary to keep mankind in order, and as destined gradually to disappear from a world which M. Cousin and his fellows and their successors shall have succeeded in elevating to something better! The divine author of our faith. He at whose name every knee should bow—is spoken of in the same language as Mohamet—as the highly gifted inventor of a scheme, skillfully and beneficently devised for the government and welfare of some barbarous nations—as a philosopher, far in advance, indeed, of the age in which he lived—but by no means sufficiently enlightened to be the moral and spiritual legislator of mankind in that philosophy-taught era to which the world is rapidly approaching."—*Foreign and Colonial Quarterly Review*.

THE affair relative to the church is likely to assume a much more serious aspect than I had at first apprehended. The professors and members of the Sorbonne (the university), have taken up the cudgels, and published extracts from the books of instructions to the priests (like those extracts in Latin made by your talented correspondent "Publicola," in one or two of his able letters some time ago). These extracts are revolting in the extreme, and have created an immense sensation of disgust against the clergy generally. The Bishop of Chartres has taken up the quarrel on the part of the clergy, and

accused the universitarians of "Teaching every crime, from murder to the most disgusting voluptuousness." Of course this accusation is without the slightest foundation; the clergy know this, and now accuse the unitarians of pantheism, or a belief that nature and god are one and the same thing, in accordance with the system of Benedict Spinoza. To this M. Michelet, from his professor's chair in the university, gives an answer worthy of great philosophers—"If the university have taught pantheism, it is that she believes it; and if she believes it, she will teach it in spite of all the clergy of the world." The result of this dispute is evident: an immense impulse will now be given to the spirit of inquiry into religion and religious ordinances; and the age of Voltaire, in this respect, no doubt, will be revived. The attempt to resuscitate the domineering influence of the clergy will evoke from the press thousands of works attacking religion and religious systems; it is now well known that all the enlightened classes in France are what is termed "infidels;" and this crusade, under the command of the Bishop of Chartres, will terminate in rendering almost all other classes of a similar way of thinking..... The leading articles of the journals have dwelt principally upon the dispute between the clergy and the university, which, as I prophesied, has assumed a very serious appearance. The ministerial papers condemn the proceedings of the Sorbonne, but do not altogether maintain the cause of the Bishop of Chartres in his attack upon the professors and members of that ancient and far-famed seat of learning. Voltaire himself uttered this remarkable prophecy—"The Sorbonne, now the centralising point of all religious opinions as well as of animosities, will be the very institution destined to destroy the christian religion in the end." One newspaper, in particular, contrasts the state of the clergy in Ireland with that of France, and quotes the words of Doctor Higgins at the late repeal meeting, when that dignitary disowned any connexion with the aristocracy—"A state of opinion so different from the domineering, intolerant, and insolent sentiments entertained by the clergymen of France." It was the clergy, quite as much as the court and aristocracy, that goaded the French people to such desperation half a century ago, that the revolution was the consequence; and if the guillotine were deluged with blood, who were most to blame—the people who determined to extirpate their oppressors, or the oppressors who drove them to that extreme verge of desperation?—*From the Correspondent of the Weekly Dispatch*.

THE ORACLE OF REASON: Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE"

First Editor—Charles Southwell, imprisoned for twelve months and fined £100, for Blasphemy in No. 4.

Second Editor—George Jacob Holyoake, imprisoned for six months, for Blasphemy.

Third Editor—Thomas Paterson, imprisoned for one month, for Blasphemous Placards.

Vendors—George Adams, imprisoned for one month for selling No. 4; and Harriet Adams, his wife, arrested for selling No. 25.

No. 80.]

[PRICE 1D.]

HARMONY OF THE GODLIES.

I.

OUT of the abundance of the resources of the church militant, has sprung forth her weakness, inasmuch as in attempting to defend her position on too many grounds, in summoning to her assistance too many and too different auxiliaries, she has exposed her really deplorable weakness through the onslaughts of her mercenaries on each other. One hireling holds up the banner of revelation and fights under it, not only excluding, but absolutely falling foul of, all others; another hoists the flag of reason or natural theology, and without its aid, declares the "infidel foe" invincible.

"Divide and conquer" is an old church-and-state maxim, and to adopt a modification of the tactics of this "holy alliance," divide and conquer might be equally applicable to ourselves. The work of godly demolition will be rendered far more destructive to them, and easy to us, to pit one against the other, the faith-forces against the reason-forces, the upholders of natural, against the supporters of unnatural, theology. The revelatory account of the solar system, and the genuineness of what are called the "Books of Moses" have been so often questioned and exposed, that any new objections on the part of infidels to the absurd and ridiculous pretensions of revelation would be a work of supererogation. But it may be useful to know the opinion of a dignitary of the church on the *mosaic* narrative of the creation. Dr. Buckland, canon of Christ-church, thinks that "A misconception of the terms employed in the *mosaic* account of the creation has been employed, and it has been unwarrantably inferred that the existence of the universe as well as the human race dates from an epoch of about 6000 years ago." And the *Westminster Review*, following up this opinion, says, "There is no question whatever that this notion (*mosaic*) has been utterly disproved by the discoveries of geology, which demonstrate the surface of our

planet not merely to have existed, but to have undergone physical changes very similar to those which affect it at present, and to have been quietly and happily tenanted by a long succession of living creatures, vegetable as well as animal, for countless ages before the epoch from which our scriptural chronology dates, and which was signalised by the first appearance of man." Dr. Buckland, however, tries to reconcile the phenomena of geology with the account in Genesis, of the creation, thus, "That the phrase employed in the first words of Genesis, 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,' may refer to an epoch antecedent to the 'first day,' subsequently spoken of in the 5th verse, and that during this indefinite interval, comprising, perhaps, millions and millions of years, all the physical operations disclosed by geology were going on." Further investigation however seems to modify his views, or perhaps ashamed of cutting up revelation so unmercifully, a little further on he observes, "After all, it should be recollected that the question is not respecting the correctness of the *mosaic* narrative but of our interpretation of it; and still further, it should be borne in mind, that the object of this account was not to state in *what manner*, but by *whom*, the world was made." Well done, Buckland, there he has completely knocked revelation on the head; for if the bible does not speak truly in what manner the "world was made" why of course no credit can be given for its statement of "by whom." The whole of the doctor's "treatise" is devoted to showing the peculiar proofs of design and contrivance, and attesting the power, wisdom, and goodness of the creator. The most critical infidel will allow the godly reasoner plenty of "design and contrivance" in one department at least of his labour of love, and if the power, wisdom, and goodness of the creator are not shown forth, that of the Duke of Bridgewater is satisfactorily settled. A £1000 sterling, or thereabouts, is a powerful persuader. If *if* is a great peacemaker, gold is a great logician.

But what say the revelationists to these designing gentlemen? Hear another theo-

logical gun on the subject, I copy the following from *Fraser's Magazine* :

"Verily, a revelation is needed as the prior condition—a revelation which shall inform us of a designer previously to our remarking any traces of either in the visible or the intelligible. Mr. Irons rightly recognises an 'almost instinctive reference from nature to its great cause' as universal among men; and it may be questioned if there is a human being whom the rays of this revelation, in some way or other, have not reached. But for this, the natural theologian would be as blind as a mole to all that he professes to discover; so untrue is the position, that while revealed religion requires the support of natural theology, the latter can stand by itself alone. The reverse is the fact. Man, by his unassisted natural powers, could never have determined any one truth of theology or religion—nay, we go further, he never could have had a theology or religion at all." Good! What becomes of the naturals, either the whole-naturals or the half-naturals, after this? Paley strained his wits, if he did not his conscience, for the latter he owned he could not afford to keep—for what? To prove what Mr. Irons, the unnatural, stoutly asserts is incapable of proof, indeed, is directly contrary to fact, namely, that design, as demonstrative of a god, could ever occur to the untutored intellect. Paley, the theological-natural, spins a long web of sophistry, to show that god is seen in his works, and must be known by his works. Irons, the theological-unnatural, toils through a labour of logic, and no inconsistent or inconclusive one either, to prove that god is not seen in his works, and cannot be known by them, but that we only have the honour of his acquaintance—an express visit or a personal introduction—through his friend Moses or some other intimate. Thus far Irons on Paley, and the half-natural or theo-natural school, and as nice a piece of demolition he has made of it, as any "cankered" infidel would wish to see.

T. P.

DES CARTES.

SPINOZA is said to have taken his philosophy from Des Cartes. The pupil became celebrated for his atheism, and judging from what is given of the master, it is extraordinary he had not come to the same conclusion. We are told that Des Cartes disbelieved in god, even in matter, but he rested in a consciousness of his existence. This we share with all other living beings, and if this proof of life be evident, we would say the demonstration of death, non-identity of person, would be still greater to himself and others, when he

ceased to exist, and to have a consciousness of it. How Des Cartes jumps to the conclusion, that the existence of god is clearly proclaimed by a man's own consciousness, we know not, but if it be granted, then god only existed whilst he was alive, not before he was born, nor when he was dead. Des Cartes arrives at a very probable conclusion, when he says, interrogating his consciousness or examining life, he finds man miserably finite and imperfect. The atheist is satisfied with this inference, his knowledge can go no further—on his ignorance he does not build castles in the air, like the deist and Des Cartes. Finitude and imperfection are taken from reality, but in infinity and perfection we have no objects answering to the ideas. They are beyond the powers of thought, and no person can explain himself on the subjects of infinity and perfection. Who can compass finitude or infinity? Try the first, and think if you can rest at any point and not think beyond—suppose a universal globe, and there is the outside still to contemplate. Try the second, think on and on, add number to number, dimension to dimension—but the mind will never cover beyond a certain space. We cannot, therefore, come to the conclusion of Des Cartes, "By my finitude, therefore, I am conscious of not being the all; by my imperfection, of not being the best. Yet an infinite and perfect being must exist, for infinity and perfection are implied as co-relations to my ideas of finitude and imperfection." This we deny. As we said before, we are conscious and unconscious of our existences, we have a beginning and we have an end, a before and an after, we are and we are not. We cannot realise infinity or perfection in matter, much less in consciousness. Indeed, the negative arguments are in favour of infinity in matter, because if we had the power we might go much beyond the finitude of our present existence, and we cannot embrace the idea of annihilation in matter. As to perfection, the task of defining or describing it, we should think much greater than infinity, the arguments against the latter apply to the former. Hitherto, therefore, the reasoning of Des Cartes, if it can be called reasoning, is in favour of matter. In it we have an all compared to a part, infinity and perfection, compared to the finiteness and imperfection of ourselves and other creatures. With our powers, as explained above, it is all we can arrive at. Consciousness, life, or existence, seems but a product or attribute of matter or the all.

What is consciousness, or the material being—as nothing in comparison with the infinity and perfection of all around us? We can only abide by the signification of things, and therefore we do not think that unreality is implied by a reality. Not that

we own there is any reality in the separate consciousness of Des Cartes. We cannot, therefore, talk nonsense, and say, "The infinite and perfect can be none other than god," though we might say it of matter in comparison with our own individuality. "God therefore exists—his existence is clearly proclaimed in my consciousness—and can no more be a matter of doubt than can my own existence" Why should the infinite and the perfect be in the resemblance of me? Why in the resemblance of an inferior part of me, my consciousness? Why is an attribute of, and not in matter itself? If consciousness were a whole, and not parts—if consciousness were the infinite and perfect, it could not be finite and imperfect—as it is in us—therefore the very assumption of Des Cartes, proves the untruth of his propositions, when he says. "God being perfect, cannot deceive us—it is we who deceive ourselves, by taking vague and confused ideas for clear and true ones." Such is the case, we should say, with all Cartesians—and if they only followed the four rules that Des Cartes laid down, as indispensable in the pursuit of truth, we should say, there would have been no alternative for the master and his followers, but is pure atheism as his pupil Spinoza taught from these premises :

1. Never to accept anything as true but what is evidently so; to admit nothing into the mind but what so clearly and distinctly presents itself as true that there can be no reason to doubt it — (Independance of authority)
2. To divide every question into as many separate questions as possible; that each part being more easily conceived, the whole may become more intelligible—(Analysis).
3. To conduct the examination with order, beginning by that of objects the most simple and therefore the easiest to be known, and ascending little by little up to knowledge of the most complex—(Synthesis).
4. To make such exact calculations, and such circumspections, as to be confident that nothing essential has been omitted.

I find in the "Dictionary of Atheists," by Sylvain Marechal, p. 102. under Des Cartes, the following: "I affirm for a certainty, that whosoever follows entirely the system of Des Cartes, must become Spinozists." (The Philosophy of Gool Sense). "When Spinoza turned to the study of philosophy, he was very soon disgusted with ordinary systems, and found his account wonderfully in that of Des Cartes. God is only being—the being of all which is being—the being of all of that of which he can say: that is—in physics, mathematics, morals.

"God, it is being.

"Being, it is god.

"Being is his essential name."

"After these propositions, surely, Hardouin is right. Des Cartes is an atheist, if the Spinozists are atheists. Hardouin calls the principles of Des Cartes, the philosophy of the atheists."

The Cartesian philosophy, says the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, is founded on two principles. First, I think, therefore I am. Second, Nothing exists but substance. But how can we make a duality, as the *London and Westminster Review* calls it, two out of one infinite and perfect? The moment separation is made, limits are placed, there ceases infinity and perfection. Spinoza, therefore, as it appears to me, without any very great subtlety in his synthesis, as the *London and Westminster Review* terms it, "Reduced the duality of Des Cartes to his own all embracing unity, and thus arrived at a conception of the one."

W. J. B.

THEORY OF REGULAR GRADATION.

XXXVIII.

MANKIND have been so accustomed to meet with theories based upon vague generalities, instead of well-determined facts and experiments—have been so accustomed to the synthetical, instead of the analytical, mode of reasoning—that an individual, wanting a name, who does not possess the tact or facilities for placing in a popular or entertaining light important facts, which he thinks deserving consideration, stands but slight chance of being read. If the evil ended in the rejection of the unpopular author, it might readily be tolerated, but unfortunately men tire in the pursuit of truth when they find the road to it rugged and uninteresting, instead of smooth and pleasant, as they anticipated—forgetful that the gem when obtained is beyond all price, and will amply repay them for the trouble which its acquisition has cost.

The talented editor of the *Investigator* has said, in reference to the multitude of rubbishing works which have been written upon metaphysics, that if the celebrated Alexandrian Library consisted of such books, he did not regret its destruction. But though he might *now* regret the bushels of chaff which he has turned over, only to obtain a few grains of corn, still he has the satisfaction of knowing that he has not heedlessly rejected any man's opinions, but is able to give a satisfactory reason for the faith which is within him. This he could not have done, had he left unexamined

authors considered by the world worthy of credit. Hume, in his beautiful and masterly essay on "Liberty and Necessity," says, "I own that this dispute has been so much canvassed on all hands, and has led philosophers into such a labyrinth of obscure sophistry, that it is no wonder if a sensible reader indulge his ease so far as to turn a deaf ear to the proposal of such a question, from which he can expect neither instruction nor entertainment. But the state of the argument here proposed may, perhaps, serve to renew his attention; as it has more novelty, promises at least some decision of the controversy, and will not much disturb his ease by any intricate or obscure reasoning."

When an apology was deemed necessary by such an accomplished and able writer as Hume to introduce a subject of such immense importance as the one upon which he was treating—how much more necessary is an apology from me for the *manner* in which I have treated the subject of my labours? With all sincerity, then, I offer the most ample apology to the readers of the *Oracle* for the uninteresting and unpopular manner in which I have treated the important and really interesting question, when properly handled, of animal gradation. The fault was in the operator and not in the subject. I was induced to enter upon the investigation from the very favourable reception which the articles of my friend Southwell had met with—forgetful that therein lay the reason which should check, rather than incite, me to the attempt. Having, though the medium of geology and comparative anatomy, been led to suspect the truth of the generally received opinion of man's origin—I thought I could not do better than place in a consecutive form the facts which had first led me to think upon, and ultimately to dispute the truth of, that opinion. This course in other hands might have been fraught with beneficial results, but in my case I fear it has failed. A much valued friend, and one who has had ample opportunities of arriving at a correct conclusion, writes me that my articles upon the Theory of Regular Gradation "are wished to be discontinued." In justice to myself, and without egotism, I may say, that contrary opinions have come to my knowledge. In deference, then, to the general wishes of the readers of the *Oracle*, and agreeably to my own inclinations, I shall conclude the subject as quickly as possible. But, inasmuch as I have some interesting matter, which may not be in the possession of many parties, I trust I may be excused for occupying their attention for a few more weeks.

I have brought to a close my digest of the comparative anatomy of the animal kingdom. In some twenty numbers, comprising at the most forty pages, I have given the

chief points of analogy which the researches of modern investigators have proved to exist between the various beings of the animate world. Professor Evers, to whose "Compendium of Comparative Anatomy," I have principally been indebted, says that he has consulted the works of Baron Cuvier, Linnaeus, Grant, Lamarck, Owen, Lawrence, Sir Charles Bell, Blumenbach, Sir E. Home, Hunter, and many others, a guarantee that the statements made are based upon well-ascertained facts, and not upon mere conjecture.

Before concluding, I purpose giving a few extracts from Mr. Charles White's work, entitled "An account of the Regular Gradation in man, and in different animals and vegetables; and from the former to the latter." A great portion, in fact *all*, of this interesting book would be worth reprinting, but the smallness of the space which can be devoted to the subject in these pages renders it impossible, even if it were advisable, and I shall, therefore, confine myself principally to his concluding remarks. Afterwards, I shall give the philosophy of the celebrated M. Lamarck, as explained by Mr. Lyell, which, with some few observations of my own will, I believe, bring my labours to a close.

Mr. White, in the work above named, says, "The inferences to be drawn from the facts given, are these:—That there is a general gradation from man through the animal race; from animals to vegetables, and through the whole vegetable system. By gradation, I mean the various degrees in the powers, faculties, and organisation. The gradation from man to animals is not by one way; the person and actions descend to the ourang-outang, but the voice to birds, as has been observed.

"That there are many quadrupeds, insects, birds, and fishes, which appear to be created for particular climates, and cannot live in any other.

"That many animals and vegetables exist in the old world, which were not found in the new one, when discovered by Columbus; and that there are many animals and vegetables found in the new world, which were never known in the old.

"Lastly, that those animals which were common to both worlds, were only to be met with in the northern hemisphere, in which the new and old world had probably communications near the north pole. These animals were about twenty-six in number.

"The gradation that exists in the animal kingdom, extends to the organs of sensation as these differ in different subjects with respect to sensibility, dimensions, figure, &c. It also extends to the various dispositions of the animal economy. It may be traced from the brain of the human European

which is the largest of any animal we are acquainted with, be its size ever so enormous, to the polypus, who has none at all—from the keen eye of an eagle and a hawk, and the great number of eyes of a fly, to those animals that have none, as the blind-worm—from the acute olfactory nerves of a dog, to those animals who have not the faculty of smelling—from the large ears of an ass, to those that are void of that organ—from animals whose feelings is exquisite, to those that have comparatively little sensation—from the catamenia of an European female, to those animals that have no such discharge—from animals that have the greatest evacuation by sweat, to such as have not that discharge, as the dog—from the quills of the porcupine, the spines of the hedge-hog, and the long coarse hair of an arctic bear, to the soft sleek hair of the mole and the dormouse—from the thin skin of the human European face, to the thick coat of mail of the elephant and the rhinoceros—from the milk white to the jet black colour of many animals and vegetables, both birds, quadrupeds, fishes, insects, reptiles, and the flowers of plants—from the high prominent nose of the human European, to those that are perfectly flat—from the projecting chin of man, to those animals who have no chin—from the perpendicular face of the human European, to the horizontal one of the woodcock—from the short jaw-bone of man to that of the whale, which is the longest known—from the double row of sharp teeth of the shark, the grinders and tusks of an elephant, and the teeth of a lobster, which are placed in the stomach, to those which have none—from the gizzard of a bird, which is composed of two strong muscles placed opposite to and acting upon each other as two grindstones (the two flat lateral surfaces of the grinding cavity being lined with a thick horny substance) to the most tender membranous stomach, which digests the food by its own gastric juice, the former being more peculiarly adapted for vegetable and the latter for animal food—from those animals which bring forth but one at a birth, to those who are seen to produce a thousand, as the spider and the beetle.

“Lavater is of opinion, that the same gradation holds good in physiognomy; he says, ‘From the weakest of winged insects up to the towering eagle, from the worm which crawls under our feet, up to the elephant, up to the formidable lion, you everywhere discover a gradation of physiognomical expression.’”

If two or three persons can only be found to take the lead in any absurdity, however great, there is sure to be plenty of imitators. Like sheep in a field, if one clears the stile, the rest follow.—*Charles Mackay.*

REPEAL BY ASSASSINATION; OR, ATHEISTIC INTOLERANCE AND SUICIDAL BIGOTRY.

Ireland would do well to begin by a systematic assassination of all the parsons in that country, beginning with the worst, and proceeding to the best, men—if they were obstinate enough to remain in the country.—*Oracle of Reason*, No. 78.

I WAS both surprised and grieved to read in the *Oracle* the above atrocious sentiment, and still more to find that it was not the effusion of an occasional correspondent, but that it proceeded from the pen of one that seemed, by the absence of signature,* to have something to do with the general management of the paper. Before commenting upon the quotation, I will make a few general remarks on the repeal of the legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland.

I admit that Britons have been tyrants to Irishmen, so far as the general government of the country is concerned, and I would put an end to that tyranny in the shortest possible period, but not by the method suggested in the *Oracle*, nor by the repeal of the “binding principle,” that at present exists between the two countries, believing, as I do, that tyranny would, in the aggregate, be increased by such a system. At best it would produce but a change of masters, not a change of condition—a change of men, but not a change of measures—the alteration, therefore, would be no amendment, and if such would be the case, the alteration would be in vain. I believe so for the following, among many other, reasons:

1. Because the catholic clergy have never been contented with anything short of entire slavery of body and mind, and have been the greatest foes to human progression and human happiness in every quarter of the world where they have possessed the power to enforce their decrees.

2. Because the people of Ireland are the willing slaves of these priests—theologically, politically, and socially—and follow wherever they choose to lead, and are disposed to do anything they recommend. From these two reasons it will be perceived that the priests have both the will and the power to effect a vast amount of evil, but not the will to effect any substantial good.

In support of these conclusions, I might enter into a detailed exposition of the history of the romish church, and the past and present state of Ireland, such exposition could not fail to show that I have truth on my side. Those who doubt this had better study history and read the newspapers of the day, and their doubting will be changed to con-

* The writer of the article, W. J. B., never appends his initials to his MSS., and their absence was overlooked.—EDITOR.

viction in a very short time. Witness for example, the treatment that chartists and socialists have met with from the catholics of Ireland. The two parties just mentioned have been treated bad enough in England and Scotland by protestants, but their treatment by catholics throw this quite into the shade. It is no argument to say that English catholics have not been worse than other religionists—they have not had the power to be so. Because in England they are numerically weak, whilst in Ireland they are numerically strong, we must judge of parties, not by their weakness but by their strength. In the one case they “keep their hands off” from compulsion, but it is not so in the other. By repeal Ireland would become a foe to herself and to Britain, like the ancient Britons. She would call other nations to aid her in her struggles, and find by experience that pulling down one tyranny by physical force was merely the prelude to the establishment of another, thereby falling out of the “frying pan into the fire.”

Irishmen should take part in the struggle for liberty with others—for by that method, and that alone, can they become free—if they seek for liberty by moral means, they will lay the foundation of future permanent success—for by moral means is meant the improvement of public opinion—if they seek it by physical force, the chances are as a thousand to one that they fail. The same may be said of the British struggle for liberty—if two thirds of the adult population desired it, they would gain it by moral force in a short time—and if less than two thirds were to attempt it by physical force, they would not stand the slightest chance of success. For one “outbreak” that has succeeded (in the history of this country, and the world generally) a thousand has failed, for “the king’s name is a tower of strength, which they of the adverse faction want”—and beside this, *all* the people have never been true to themselves, so many wretches are always ready to betray the popular cause. I have written thus much on physical force, because the article from which I have made a quotation at the head of this communication, in fact recommends it as a means of reforming the world, and as it is not a likely means of doing so, it ought to be denounced.

In regard to the recommendation of assassination, I object to it on the following grounds:

1. Because it substitutes individual revenge for public justice.
2. Because no man’s life would be safe for a single moment, as all are liable to give offence to some.
3. Because the world has never been made better, but a great deal worse by it.

4. Because it deprives man of all the advantages of living in society.

5. Because it makes no provision for the escape of the innocent, nor yet proportions the punishment to the offence.

6. Because man has no right to take away that life he has not the power to give.

I need not enlarge on the dangers to which sceptics will be exposed if assassination is to be the order of the day, they will be evident to every thinking mind, nor yet upon the destruction of confidence that would ensue from its adoption, and the deadening influence it would have upon the progress of society, for these things must be familiar to all who have studied the history of mankind.

Trusting that reformers will soon recommend rational, and therefore useful and effectual means of reforming the world, I am, in the cause of human emancipation,

A COVENTRY SOCIALIST LECTURER.

THE REPEAL OF THE UNION.*

To the government and to loyal Irishmen alike we say—talk or be silent as you please—act or be quiet as circumstances and your own prudence shall dictate; but prepare, and that steadily and effectually—prepare to meet physical force by physical force. It must come to that. The whigs will “take leave to say,” as Lord John Russell did last Friday, that they “Have heard nothing which seems to call for these extraordinary precautions and this great expenditure of naval and military power,” nothing “Which would justify the measures which her majesty’s government appear to have taken.” Such talk as this may be safely left to the public contempt. The country knows better, and may be trusted to, whatever a nibbling opposition may choose to say or think, to see or not to see, for supporting an honest minister in what he finds necessary for the security and integrity of the British empire.—*Times*, June 8.

To assassinate only means to kill—the derivation of the word is from a tribe, who lived in the mountains of Syria at the time of the crusades, and who thought it no wrong to pick off the christians assembled to impose by force of arms the blessings of christianity on their country. This is a parallel to Ireland, where protestant priests, backed by thirty thousand troops, wish to live upon a people of another faith. To tell the Irish without arms to meet a disciplined English army in fair fight, is to ask them to be assassinated, and to aid in perpetuating the wrong upon themselves. It is only when the odds are immensely in favour of the strong in wrong, against the weak in right, that recourse can be had to assassination, in order to turn the scale in favour of the latter. It is only in an extreme case,

* This article must not be considered an answer to “A Coventry Socialist Lecturer”—the writer, though aware of its intended appearance, has not yet seen it.—EDITOR.

and I take that of Ireland to be one, that assassination is the only means of defence left to a nation. Certain it is that no nation who ever had recourse to that mode of warfare, ever had in its employment the justification of Ireland. Six hundred years of oppression and conquest, will justify a nation in ridding themselves of their enemies, if they will not take themselves away. It will be remembered, that I put the case of the assassination of the parsons hypothetically, "if they were obstinate enough to remain in the country." If they showed symptoms of flight, who would deny them the means of living or the right of life, where else and in what other way they liked? I think it would be a more merciful mode of proceeding than an open civil war. Who are the sinners? The parsons! The army itself is comparatively an innocent body. Leave them alone, but destroy the objects of the quarrel. It is avowed that the object of the repeal of the union is the church. The liberal party in the House of Commons, the liberal press admit it. Roebuck presses it on the ministry, and Sir James Graham throws it in the teeth of Lord John Russell and the whigs, and asks what, in the name of reform, is meant but the abolition of the established church in Ireland? The conservative press acknowledge *that* to be the subject matter of the dispute, which it is impossible to grant. It is for *that* the *Times* recommends the arming of the orangemen, and the consequent assassination, if you will, the massacre, of all the roman catholics. It is for *that*, that the *Times* says Sir Robert Peel shall be no longer premier, if he be not prepared to go the bloody lengths of the assassin Wellington, the assassin of Ney. It is for *that*, that an individual living on the receipts of the customs at Gloucester, a lawyer, a publican and sinner, a scriptural character, offers the government to assassinate O'Connell. It is for *that*, that all the priests of England would be glad to assassinate O'Connell—hold the rope to hang him, as I have heard them say. It is for *that*, that Wellington, at the head of his red and black-guards, would be glad to put Ireland under martial law, and hang O'Connell and all the obstinate repealers. It is for *that*, if an appeal to arms could not be made, that Wellington would have O'Connell tried for high treason, to be found guilty by orangemen, and at the close of his life would cheerfully finish his career by adding the assassination of the agitator to the assassination of Ney.

Sir James Graham, taking it for granted that the master-wrong of Ireland is the church, insultingly tells the opposition to bring forward the question of the abolition of the Irish church, and see how it will be dealt with in a British House of Commons.

Was there ever a stronger argument used for repeal? It is impossible to get your rights, he says, from us, and out of the house I will oppose them by thirty thousand troops. I will pass the Irish arms' bill, and will assassinate all who stir a step, or raise an arm in favour of a repeal of the union, which means the extinction of the church and the establishment of the rights of man.

The tyrants of Ireland choose their own ground of quarrel, and we should be prepared to meet them. They have unfurled the standard of the church for a new civil war. We should take care to make it our especial mark—if we can once pull it down, the confusion of the rest of their forces will follow. Whatever may be thought of the principles of O'Connell, I believe, with a difficult hand to manage, he has played his cards well. If he accomplishes his end by a show of physical force, and obtains another bloodless victory, it will be contrary to general precedent. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick but when she desire cometh, it is a tree of life." Six hundred years of slavery, must have sent generations after generations of gray hairs, beardless boys, women and children, "with sorrow to the grave." Every succeeding generation must feel with the poet as long as their wrongs go unredressed.

Oh! where's the slave so lowly,
Who could he burst
His bonds at first,
Would pine beneath them slowly?

The author of Ecclesiastes says, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. A time to be born, and a time to die—a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted—a time to kill, and a time to heal—a time to break down, and a time to build up—a time to weep, and a time to laugh—a time to mourn, and a time to dance—a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together—a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing—a time to get, and a time to lose—a time to keep, and a time to cast away—a time to rent, and a time to sew—a time to keep silence, and a time to speak—a time to love, and a time to hate—a time of war and a time of peace." The signs of the times are not difficult to read in Ireland.

The constitutional lawyer Blackstone, as quoted by Lord Grey, in support of the same sentiments, tells us the part we are to take when the season comes. Lord Grey denounced the English arms act of 1819, and, not satisfied with that, the noble earl put upon record on the journals of the House of Lords, a very remarkably strong protest against the measure: "Because the right of having arms for their defence, suitable to their condition and degree, is

secured to British subjects by the ancient laws of these realms, is declared to be so by the Bill of Rights, and is, in the words of Mr. Justice Blackstone, 'A public allowance of the natural right of resistance and self-preservation, when the sanctions of society and laws are found insufficient to restrain the violence of oppression.' "

Those who think differently are the tyrants themselves—those who have no wrongs, and therefore cannot feel for those of others—those who live apart from the world in sects, like monks and quakers, or those whose reasons are not sufficiently explained to make them of general adoption, and as far as themselves are concerned, are content to let the world wait until the moral millenium comes, when good prevails of itself, and evil is banished.

W. J. B.

THE SAINT'S CONSOLATION.

ALL MUST GO TO HELL!!! and why?—the bible only gives us the choice of two places to make our abode in after death—heaven and hell. (Matt.) 'Those who are not the disciples of Christ will not be admitted into heaven (Matt., John., Cor.), consequently must go to hell! That we CANNOT be Christ's disciples, hear what he himself says—"IF any man come to me, and *hate not his father, and his mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life, also*, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke). IF we possess ourselves of this hatred, to become his disciples, we cannot go to heaven, because the bible says—"Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer" (John); and again it says—"Murderers shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Rev.).

YE WHO LOVE YOUR BIBLES
GREAT IS YOUR COMFORT!!!

It is said (Prov.)—"The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going." The priest knows there is much truth in this, and in order that the credulous may not be shocked out of their credulity by the HORRID nature of the precept contained in Luke, he will endeavour to persuade you that it does not mean what it says—but that the LITERAL interpretation is the only proper one that can be given—the following verses may be taken as a positive demonstration:

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's

foes shall be they of his own household" (Matt.).

"Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, nay, but rather division: for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law" (Luke).

The lords have made a report on the evidence which they have collected, with great diligence, respecting the libel laws—and they suggest some improvements, of such obvious propriety in their general scope, that every one would expect them to be adopted, or others as good in their place, if it were not the monomania of many legislators to be conservatives of abuses universally condemned, but not likely to lead to popular resistance. Even in this report there would seem to be an instance of this clinging to ancient error—the committee recommend no alteration in the law respecting *public* prosecutions, not because that part of the law is unobjectionable, but because the present *practice* is lenient—that is, the law is useless at present, because moderate governments are ashamed to use it—but it is left for the use of tyrannical governments, should such again occur.—*Spectator*, June, 3, 1843.

POLITICAL SUMMARY.—Rebellion in Wales—Revolt in the church of Scotland, and crusade of the presbyterians—Fight between churchmen and dissenters over the factory bill—Quarrel in the church of England raging—Insurrection of the military at Manchester—Riot at Bromsgrove—Another Affghanistan found in Sindh—The funds falling—Rents sinking—The people starving—Peace and plenty—Large majorities on one side—Men's minds only made up in the House of Commons—Is there nothing out of all this Macbeth incantation-witchery-scene of action and agitation which may not shape events favourable to atheism and republicanism? Amen.

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No. 81.]

[PRICE 1D.]

THE REPEAL OF THE UNION.

IN an article on the repeal of the union, signed “A Coventry Socialist Lecturer,” the writer admits that “Britons have been tyrants to Irishmen, so far as the general government of the country is concerned, and that he would put an end to that tyranny in the shortest possible period, but not by an appeal to physical force or a repeal of the union..... Believing in the aggregate that tyranny would be increased *by such a system*”—the repeal, if I understand the relation of his words rightly.

In the first place, it seems always overlooked, that the repeal of the binding principle has always been stated by O’Connell to be the alternative of not having certain measures passed by the united legislature of the country. O’Connell stated that he must have the established church in Ireland abolished, municipal regulations the same as in England, an increase of members of parliament, an extension of the franchise, and an alteration in the land tenures.

In his address to the people from the repeal association, O’Connell states that if they can get the legislature of Ireland granted to them, they will go much further than in those measures which they offered to accept as a beginning of justice from England. They would embody in great part the principles of the charter. People have published utopian theories, never likely to be realised; but with an appearance of accomplishment or the resort to the sword, I do not recollect manifestos that ever went further than those of O’Connell’s. It has been the course of all revolutions, often unhappily, I think, to begin with very slight demands, the alleged cause of the quarrel has often appeared in the highest degree contemptible. As success has crowned the efforts of rebels, in proportion they have increased their demands, until they have thrown off the entire yoke of slavery. It was comparatively a trifling affair, which might have been easily compromised, between England and her American colonies, but concessions came too late, revolution progressed, and it resulted in the

independence of the republic of the United States. But, says the socialist lecturer, “If it were not to result in the increase of tyranny, which I believe, at best it would produce but a change of masters, not a change of condition, a change of men, but not a change of measures.” I am at a loss to guess from this conclusion to the commencement of the paragraph, what the socialist lecturer means by the admission that Britons have been tyrants to Irishmen, and to what tyranny he would put an end in the shortest possible period. Does he think that when they had got the repeal of the union, or its equivalent from the British parliament, or shot all the protestant parsons, that they would double the endowments of the church established at present, and send to England or to the orangemen to supply them with a fresh importation of parsons? or, in order to increase the tyranny, that they would go back, repeal emancipation, re-enact all the penal laws, invite the Duke of Wellington to renew the massacres consequent on their former insurrections, and to represent in his own person or in that of some other sent from the war office, Cromwell, who slaughtered, shipped off, and drove a living remnant of the Irish, when his sword dropped weary from his side, into Connaught? The socialist would put an end to tyranny (we are not told what) in the shortest possible period, but he would not allow it to be done either by physical force or peaceful means. According to his argument, the relinquishment of penal laws, the emancipation of the catholics, involved but a change of masters, not a change of condition, a change of men, not a change of measures.

Accomplished by physical or moral force, the fall of the established church in Ireland, fixity in land tenures, enlarged municipalities, increased suffrage, vote by ballot, the voluntary principle with regard to religion, and the application of the funds of the church to the poor and education, with several other steps in the progress of reform, would produce but a change of masters, not a change of condition—a change of men, but not a change of measures. If those formerly passed to relieve the Irish, and

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which they were glad to get, were not measures, what does the socialist mean by measures? If the change from losing their property, and being put to death for their religion, or banished the country, to comparative security of life and property, were no changes in the condition of men, what does the socialist mean by condition of men? If catholic emancipation, the rights of citizenship to a certain extent, were no change in the condition of men, again, what does he mean by the condition of men? If further rights of citizenship are sought to be obtained, equal rights with socialists, or even more rights than they have—if great principles are sought to be established, and acted upon by governments in advance of us, and if they obtain them by any means, what does the socialist mean by asserting they will make no change in the condition of men? I have to pay tithes to the clergy of the established church, I would much rather give the money to the socialist lecturer, that the parish might have the benefit of his opinions, or to a social institution, public instruction, or the support of the poor. However, I should be told by him, that the acquisition of this right made no difference of condition in me, or in him, or in those who had now the means of hearing, and might adopt his views of society. Still, I should think this alteration from the established church to the voluntary principle, would not only be a change of measures, that would produce still further changes, a change in our relative conditions that would work still greater, but would be an amendment, and an alteration, therefore, not in vain.

I even think a change of masters and men would be thought by most people a change of measures and conditions. If, instead of the protestant parson living on the tithes, with no congregation in Ireland, the money was given to the roman catholic priest, who had all the people in the parish, the Irish would think this change of masters and men, a great change of measures and of their conditions. This would be simply an act of justice, as the matter stands, and they would not have to pay their own priesthood, who would be amply provided for. But I need not repeat that they intend to go much further than this. Even a change in masters and men, without any change in condition and measures, has always been thought desirable. Socialists would prefer a social executive—chartists one from their body—leaguers would have leaguers—masters and men must precede measures and conditions—and all people accordingly seek those representatives, who would give them the measures and that condition they seek. Sheep would prefer the protection of shepherds' dogs to wolves, though they must become

mutton. The socialist proceeds to give the reasons of the faith as it is in him, which make up another belief, or rather, now, a series of prophetic announcements. "1. Because the catholic clergy have never been contented with anything short of entire slavery of body and mind, and have been the greatest foes to human progression and human happiness in every quarter of the world where they have possessed the power to enforce their decrees. 2. Because the people of Ireland are the willing slaves of these priests, theologically, politically, and socially, and follow wherever they choose to lead, and are disposed to do anything they recommend. From these two reasons it will be perceived, that the priests have both the will and the power to effect a vast amount of evil, but not the will to effect any substantial good."

The above reads to me like a no-popery placard, issued before catholic emancipation. Old tory conservatives have renounced such language, as witness the speeches of Lord John Manners, a scion of the house of Rutland, and Mr. Milnes sitting on the ministerial benches, who have at least discarded antipathies, and speak of the roman catholic as they do of the church of England. It is rare now to hear a man deliver ultra sentiments of abhorrence with regard to the roman catholic, in comparison with his own religion. Mr. Lane Fox did deliver himself of something similar to the socialist—I will give the extract, and the way it was received by the house. "It was said that Rome was not to be feared now a-days—on the contrary, he believed Rome was now more terrible than she ever was since the days of the old she-wolf, the wet-nurse of Romulus and Remus." (Roars of laughter).

If the socialist had said what he did of all religions and religionists, I should have agreed with him, as I do with Hume, who gives all priests the same character, and therefore, he says, we are ever to look upon them with a jealous eye. That I consider the sentiment of an atheist, and I consider it the prerogative of one to look upon all religions and religionists alike—and if I could discover any difference, I should not think myself, on that account, bound to support the tyranny of one party over another. But as a question of fact and history, and as a matter of comparison, which the socialist has made it, by individualising the roman catholic church, I deny the truth of his assertions. How is it that, in past history, roman catholic countries have so often preceded us in toleration, and have gone far beyond us, years before, and that many of them in that point are now far in advance of us? How was it that in the midst of our penal laws, roman catholics and protestants, in France and

Germany, reciprocally allowed each other the exercise of their worship? How was it that Joseph the second, of Austria, enacted that as far as regarded religion, Turk, heretics, and infidels, should all enjoy the same privileges? How was it that James the second, of England, published an act of toleration, and got hurled from his throne for it? This declaration the writer of the "History of England," in Lardner's Cyclopaedia, observes, was a document far in advance of the age, as the event proved, and one that comprised principles of religious liberty we have not yet attained to. How was it that in France, where the roman catholic has ever been, and is the established religion of the majority, there have been such revolutions in favour of liberty? How is it that they have freer institutions than we have, certainly with regard to religion? How is it that among other priests who have been volunteers in the fight of liberty, they have had a Meslier and a Lammennais.

How is it that on the continent there are roman catholic kings to protestant people, and *vice versa*, protestant kings to roman catholic people? How is it that in many of the villages of the continent, the inhabitants are equally divided, and they share the church in common? How is it that in France, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, and in parts of Germany, the rights of citizenship, the advantages of living in society, are the same to all religions? How is it that in France four religious persuasions receive stipends for their ministers from the government, the protestants being paid the highest? How is it that other countries of the continent, more or less follow the same system? How is it that Belgium, the most religious roman catholic country in Europe, where the revolution and the separation from protestant Holland originated in the priests, they elected a protestant king, have much the same code as France, have the freest press of any nation, the cheapest government, and an extensive franchise? They make a parallel in many respects to the Irish catholics, they have only to complete it by effecting a repeal of the union with England, and making the consequences of a revolution in Ireland the same as in Belgium, spite of those who deny them all their liberty, because they are pleased to be prophetic as to the bad use the Irish would make of it.

In Belgium there is no law against blasphemy. The bible society boasted they had issued more bibles in Belgium than any other country. Last summer in Brussels and all the towns of Belgium, the walls were placarded with the announcement of sales of bibles, and pedlars were marching about the streets offering them for sale. In this single point of blasphemy I will give what the

sixth report of the commissioners on criminal law say of us in comparison of other nations and other faiths. "Most of the penal systems of modern Europe contain no provisions against the crime of blasphemy. It appears to us that these omissions are founded upon mistaken views... Among modern laws, the French *code penal* contains no provisions for the punishment of persons reviling god or christianity, except where such conduct amounts to a violation of the right of religious freedom, or an interruption of the exercise of public worship. The additions made to the *code penal* in 1825, under the head of 'Sacrilege,' have but imperfectly supplied this deficiency. The Prussian law punishes 'gross blasphemies of god publicly uttered,' and 'giving general offence,' with imprisonment for two to six months; and revilings of any religious communities allowed by the state, and disturbances of divine service are visited with a somewhat higher degree of punishment. The Austrian code declares, that 'Whosoever shall blaspheme god in speeches, writings, or actions, or shall interrupt any religious exercise allowed by the state, or shall by the indecent abuse of vessels used for divine service, or otherwise by actions, speeches, or writings, publicly manifest contempt for religion,' shall be punished according to the 'Degree of scandal occasioned, and the degree of malice in the offender, with heavy imprisonment, for any period between one year and ten years.' The Bavarian code makes no direct mention of blasphemy as an offence, but contains provisions for punishing a disturbance of public worship, attended by personal violence, with imprisonment for any period between one and six years, and a disturbance by opprobrious words, without personal violence, with imprisonment for any period from one month to six months. We may here observe, that in none of these laws, nor in the laws of any country with which we are acquainted, excepting the law of England and those states of America which have adopted the English common law, is it declared to be a crime simply to deny the truth of the doctrines of natural or revealed religion; offences of this class being invariably made to consist in the use of indecent, railing, or scurrilous language on such subjects" (pp. 81, 82). Whence did that famous declaration with regard to religious liberty come, to be found in the Louisianian code, but from a state where the majority are roman catholics. I subjoin it here, it cannot be too often given: An extract from the report of the illustrious Edward Livingstone, upon presenting to the General Assembly of Louisiana the draft of a system of penal laws, that now constitute the penal code of that state:—"The 17th title commences the other division, distinguished as 'Private offences,'

and, first of these, stand such as affect individuals 'in the exercise of their religion.' In most other systems of penal law this title is much more extensive. It there embraces a species of offences carefully excluded from this. In those systems, the dominant religion is personified, and rendered by this fiction subject to be injured *by investigating its truth*, or doubting its divine origin. Nay, the supreme being is sometimes impiously substituted for the *mode of worship* or tenets of faith which prevail in the state, and his almighty power is protected by vain laws to punish 'offences against god and religion.' The code offered to you does not contain this absurdity. The exercise of religion is considered as a right—an inestimable one. It is restrained only by those limits that must restrict all rights—that they do not encroach upon those of another; or, in other words, do not change into wrongs. All articles of faith, all modes of worship are equal in the eye of the law—ALL are entitled to **EQUAL PROTECTION**. The fallibility of human laws does not undertake a task to which unerring wisdom is alone competent. The weakness of human laws does not attempt to avenge the cause of infinite power, and injuries and insults to the deity, are left to the being who asserts his rights to the exclusive cognisance of such offences: 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the lord.' The code has not ventured to trench upon this divine prerogative; but its provisions will be found to repress or punish any wanton or intolerant attempt to disturb or persecute; while every necessary authority is secured to religious societies, for the preservation of order among their members. So that the general principles announced in the preliminary chapter of the code, taken in connection with the provisions of this title, evince that this state will give effect to the noble experiment, that has been so successfully tried in these republics—**OF GIVING PERFECT LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE**—perfect protection to *all* religions, and substituting **PERFECT EQUALITY** for insulting *toleration*—an experiment which demonstrates how fallacious is the argument of a necessary connection between church and state; which shows that true piety may be preserved amid a variety of religious tenets; and proves that liberty in religion has the same influence on the great virtues which all sects consider as essential to produce eternal happiness, as liberty in government has on those which are the basis of political prosperity." (Introduction to the Penal Code of Louisiana. Edition 1833, p. 174.)

The only country which has lately pursued such a line of conduct as that of England towards those of a contrary faith to the state, has been protestant Prussia. There a sort of revocation of the Edict of

Nantes took place some years ago, and the nonconformists had to quit the country. But though, according to the confession of the commissioners, England is far behind every country, in laws relating to religious liberty, as far as blasphemy is concerned, yet there is a nation, a protestant nation, which may be some relief to the pride of the British from the degradation of being steeped in the lowest depths of religious intolerance. Laing gives the following account in his travels in Sweden:

"The Swede has no freedom of mind, no power of dissent in religious opinion from the established church; because although toleration nominally exists, a man not baptised, confirmed, and instructed by the clergyman of the establishment, could not communicate in the established church, and could not marry or hold office, or exercise any act of majority, as a citizen—would, in fact, be an outlaw. Contempt of god, is a crime for which, from 1830 to 1836 inclusive, fourteen persons have been condemned to death, or to slavery in chains for life. In this crime, as in treason, government must institute the proceedings: that is, the ecclesiastical department, the minister of state for church affairs, orders the prosecution. It is not, therefore, an old remnant of monkish law, working unobserved by government in rare cases; but it is *inquisition law*, working in the hands of a *lutheran state church*, as thoroughly as in Spain or Portugal, in the hands of a roman catholic church. The undefined nature of the crime which may be twisted so as to comprehend all sorts of religious dissent; the immoral nature of the evidence which generally must rest upon the espionage of servants or guests, as in the case I heard of; and the guilt itself, which religion takes out of the hands of man, and punishes here or hereafter in its own way, makes this no object for human law to deal with in enlightened times. The crime of mockery of the public service of god, or contemptuous behaviour during the same, is the first in the rubric of the second class of crimes, that is, it comes after murder, blasphemy, sodomy, but before perjury, forgery, or theft. It is, evidently, a very undefined crime, but is visited with punishment in chains for various terms of years, as a crime against the church establishment. Between 1830 and 1836, not fewer than 242 persons have been condemned to chains for this crime in Sweden. Who will say that the inquisition was abolished by Luther's reformation? It has only been incorporated with the state in lutheran countries, and exercised by the church through the ecclesiastical department of government in the civil courts instead of in the church courts. The thing itself remains in vigour; Lord Molesworth was right when he said, that

the whole of the northern people of lutheran countries have lost their liberties ever since they changed their religion for a better." (Dublin Review)

I have not read Cobbett's "History of the Reformation," but I thought he was much of Lord Molesworth's opinion with regard to the protestant reformation in England, at least that he of some fame in Coventry entertained sentiments and views very different from the why and because of the Coventry Socialist Lecturer. W. J. B.

THEORY OF REGULAR GRADATION.

XXXIX.

"M. BONNET observes, that if we survey the principal productions of nature, we shall perceive, that betwixt those of a different class, and even those of a different species, there will always be found some which will apparently link the classes or species together. The polypus forms the most striking instance, which combines the properties of an animal with those of a vegetable. He has given us a scale of beings on the principle of gradation, and pointed out those particular subjects which seem to connect the different classes, so as to form but one group of organised bodies. Whatever exceptions may be made to the scale, it is certainly ingenious; we shall give it a place. Idea of a scale of natural beings by M. Bonnet:

Man.

Orang-outang
Monkey

Quadrupeds.

Flying-squirrel
Bat
Ostrich

Birds.

Aquatic bird
Amphibious bird
Flying-fish

Fish.

Creeping-fish
Eel
Water-serpents

Reptiles.

Slug
Snail

Snails (with shells).

Pipe-worms
Moth

Insects.

Gall-insects
Tape-worm
Polypus
Sea-nettle
Sensitive-plant

Plants.

Lichens
Mouldiness
Mushrooms
Truffles
Coral
Lithophytes
Amianthes
Tales, Gypsums, Selenites
Slate

Stones.

Figured stones
Chrystallised stones

Salts.

Vitriols

Metals.

Semi-metals

Brimstone.

Bitumens

Earths.

Pure Earth

Water.

Air.

Fire.

More Subtile Matter.

"Where, for the illustration of any subject, a variety of facts are collected from every part of the globe, many of them must of course depend upon the relation of persons whose impartiality, or whose accuracy of observation, may in some instances be questioned. Enough, however, it is hoped, is ascertained to disprove the theories by which naturalists have attempted to account for what they denominate varieties of the human species; and to establish that of a gradation, as well of the human race, as of the animal and vegetable kingdoms in general.

"A gradation in the human race, supposing all to have descended from one pair, could only be the temporary result of accidental causes, and would scarcely merit a minute investigation. But as a contemplation of the facts produced, leads to the conclusion, that various species of men were originally created and separated, by marks sufficiently discriminative, it becomes an important object, in general physiology, to trace the lines of distinction. Previously to discussing the question of species, it seems necessary to consider the signification of the term as used by naturalists.

"It has been found convenient for the purposes of science, to divide the three kingdoms into classes, orders, genera, and species, each superior denomination comprehending one or more of the inferior. With respect to the three first divisions, nature herself does not seem to define, or even to recognise them, but leaves it for the sagacity of the naturalist to seize the leading characteristics, and to arrange her productions accordingly. Of the last, however, there must be some determinate and invariable

number, otherwise the productions of nature would be liable to change every generation ; and the species of animals, vegetables, and minerals, at this day, might be expected to be very different from what they were one or two thousand years ago. We find the fact to be, that were nature is left to herself, and not interrupted by the artifice of man, as in wild animals, all kinds maintain their respective specific distinctions, through a series of generations ; and that anomalous productions are rarely met with. This leaves us to infer, as most naturalists have done, that species were originally so created and constituted, as to be kept apart from each other, with certain characteristic distinctions, which form a proper subject for investigation. These distinctions, notwithstanding, have not, as it should seem, been ascertained in all cases—a diversity of opinion respecting them still prevailing.

“The most generally received characteristic of species is derived from generation. When animals, however unlike, can breed together, and their offspring is prolific, it has been deemed sufficient to warrant the conclusion that they are of the same species, the diversity of the parent animals being attributed to accidental circumstances. On this principle, not only the various kinds of dogs, but even foxes, wolves, and jackalls, must be considered as of one species. It is allowed, however, that some animals, of different species, will breed together, as the horse and ass ; but the circumstance of their offspring being barren, effectually precludes the possibility of their being of the same species. Some proofs have indeed been adduced, and upon good authority, of mules generating, although it must be acknowledged that such instances are extremely rare.

“This hypothetic characteristic of species, derived from generation, will, I am afraid, not be found to agree with facts well ascertained. It is known to every one, notwithstanding individuals of the same species are all discriminated one from another, yet that like animals generally produce their like, within certain degrees—even when the parent animals differ much from each other, the offspring, under the influence of this law, is of an intermediate nature, partaking of the properties of both. This being admitted, it is next to impossible to conceive in what manner the species of dogs, for instance, could have branched out into that diversity of kinds above alluded to, supposing that they are descended from one pair. But, even waving the inquiry how they came to be so diversified, taking them as they really are at this moment, and allowing them a free intercourse, they ought all to be reduced, in a few generations, to one common mould, resulting from a mixture of all the varieties now subsisting. This certainly ought to

follow, on the supposition that they are all of one species, and equally prolific.

“It may be said, the supposition of a free intercourse is not admissible, because the varieties once subsisting are carefully preserved by attention in the breeding. This is perhaps in some degree true ; but still an inquiry will be suggested—why does not nature, though under these restrictions, occasionally produce those varieties which she is supposed to have been the author of at some former period ? Why does not the greyhound occasionally produce a mastiff, the spaniel a bull-dog and the lap-dog a wolf ? These are difficulties which the advocates for the hypothesis ought, if possible, to obviate ; since, whilst they exist, they seem to render it altogether untenable.

“I should rather suppose that the different kinds of dogs, which, from time immemorial, have preserved their distinctive qualities, are in reality separate species of animals ; and that all others are only varieties, or mongrels, produced by the intermixture of those species, and which, like the mule, in one, two, or more generations, in the mongrel line, lose their prolific quality, and consequently become extinct. Neither the truth nor falsehood of this opinion can, I apprehend, be proved absolutely from any facts known at present ; but thus much must be admitted, that the present and former states of the dog kind, are perfectly in agreement with the hypothesis just advanced. Most certainly, the state of this domestic animal, at present, in regard to kinds and varieties, compared with what it was at any former period, does not lead us to conclude that the varieties are upon the point of swallowing up the different kinds, which are as numerous and excellent as in any former period—yet this conclusion is always presented to us by the other theory.”

RECENT ARTICLES.

MR. EDITOR.—Without one word of preface, I must tell you, that an assertion contained in an article entitled a “Repeal of the Union,” in *Oracle* 78, is in my opinion a most unwise one. The assertion I allude to is this—“Ireland would do well to begin by a systematic assassination of all the parsons in that country.” I do not believe that the writer of this sentence means what his words imply. Assassination is always revolting. I cannot conceive a case in which it would be justifiable. The example we have in Brutus, as portrayed by Shakspeare, is perhaps the best upon record—but, though I must admit that Brutus intended well, I still think he acted wrongly. Few persons can have a greater abhorrence of the profession of parsonry than myself, but I think it best to reason parsons out of existence. I have full

faith in common sense, and believe that it is influential enough to induce even the poor benighted Irish to discountenance religious nonsense. If reason is not sufficient to rid us of the heavy burden and pernicious influence of parsons, I am content that parsons remain.

Many objections have been made to a notice of the "Royal Birth," in No. 73. I also have an objection, but a very different one from any I have heard urged. I know that the intention of that notice was to show, that however tax-eaters might rejoice at a royal birth, it was no mighty cause of rejoicing to tax-payers. That notice also did this, it recorded the accouchment of the queen in about such terms as royal newspapers would notice the accouchment of a poor woman, in a poor-house. It reciprocated the compliment of a rich pauper to a poor one. All this was good. What I object to is this—that the notice did not say these things. I object to the notice, not for what it said, but for what it did not say. The writer of the notice left his design to be guessed at. This was impolitic. He should have known that nearly every man, in guessing intentions, makes it a rule to guess the worst.

Like unto the assertion in the article on the Repeal of the Union, upon which I have commented, are several passages in the articles entitled "Politics for Politicians." To these I have one objection—they contain false advice. In pulling down error, I see no necessity for pulling down another. Institutions, if bad, are to be changed—our fellow-men, if debased, are to be improved. I hold the life and happiness of my fellow-man, even of my enemy, if I have one, as sacred as my own. I know that the writer of the articles referred to, does the same thing as fervently as myself. To what do I object, then? To this—that what he thinks does not appear, in these particular instances, in what he has written.

Do not mistake my letter, Mr. Editor, and suppose that I think that you should have excluded the passages now in question, from the *Oracles* pages. Nothing of the kind. Because I object to them, it does not therefore follow that they are wrong. But I do object to them, because I think them *seriously* wrong. Right or wrong, you act a manly part, in giving them insertion. The *Oracle* is certainly an organ of free expression—but what an illiberal organ it would be if every communication was cut down or raised up to your standard. The *Oracle* would then be but the organ of the editor. And this is what every pretended organ of free expression in this country is. The editors of such papers re-cast everything they suffer to appear, in order to give the paper a oneness, and

preserve a unity. Such conduct may serve a party—but it can never serve free inquiry. Editorial despotism makes freedom of expression a farce. In the *republic* of letters every man should be heard, in his own way, and by his own words. It has been the glory of the *Oracle* to be no barren supporter of this privilege. Many rugged sentences have appeared on its pages—but they were better rugged than false.

It has been seriously suggested to me, that I should "have no more to do with the *Oracle*," because of the peculiar passages to which I have alluded. But I see not why. Lord Brougham declared the other night, in the House of Lords, in a discussion upon Irish meetings, that he contended for "The right of every man to express his opinions—even though they were the wildest extravagances." This was noble. It was the incarnation of the spirit of freedom of expression. His lordship did not forsake the principle, because wild extravagances might sometimes be expressed. I care not to say that I cannot accept the advice offered me. He would be a strange lover of freedom of expression, who should withdraw from a paper because sentiments were expressed in it contrary to his own. Such a man might talk of his love of the freedom of *his own* expression, but to talk of anything more liberal would be mockery. I will not defend all that is said, but I will defend the right to say it—and I will encourage the practice, on the part of every man, of boldly saying whatever he thinks useful to be said, however much it may be opposed to what I think correct.

I do not think it of any consequence, whether I agree or disagree with what my friends may say in the *Oracle*. Mr. Editor, we are anxious to support great principles rather than any party. We have no interest to serve in the *Oracle* but that of truth. I regard the *Oracle* as a means whereby we hold a public conversation, and it no more follows that I shall echo your sentiments, or that you shall echo mine, than it follows that when we converse privately, we shall all be of one opinion. We each speak our sincere sentiments. We care more for honesty than unity. The public profit by this course. They hear many sincere opinions instead of the false and forced echo of one. It is our business to explain our sentiments—the public's to gather from them the truth.

G. J. H.

NOTICE.

Received a parcel of American papers from Mr. Hollick.

J. G. H. inquires what parties are meant by the "Socialists of B. and C.," mentioned in the article on "The socialists god," in No. 79—the socialists of Burnley and Coventry.

Received, "How to convert infidels."

NATIONAL EDUCATION.

(Altered from Wordsworth.)

ALAS! what differs more than man from man!
And whence this difference? whence but from him-
self?

For see the universal race endowed
With the same upright form! The sun is fixed,
And the infinite magnificence of heaven
Within the reach of every human eye;
The sleepless ocean murmurs in all ears;
The vernal field infuses fresh delight
Into all hearts. Throughout the world of sense,
Even as an object is sublime or fair,
That object is laid open to the view
Without reserve or veil! and as a power
Is salutary, or its influence sweet,
Are each and all enabled to perceive
That power, that influence, by impartial law.

Gifts nobler are vouchsafed alike to all;
Reason—and, with that reason, smiles and tears;
Imagination, freedom of the will,
Conscience to guide and check; and death
To be foretasted—our mortal lives presumed.
Strange, then, nor less than monstrous might be
deemed

The failure, if the same nature or neutral nature to
this point,

Liberal and distinguishing, should hide
The excellence of moral qualities
From common understanding; leaving truth
And virtue, difficult, abstruse, and dark;
Hard to be won, and only by a few:
Strange should it deal therein with nice respects,
And frustrate all the rest! Believe it not;
The primal duties shine aloft like stars;
The charities, that soothe, and heal, and bless,
Are scattered at the feet of man, like flowers.
The generous inclination, the just rule,
Kind wishes, and good actions, and pure thoughts—
No mystery is here; no special boon
For high and not for low—for proudly graced
And not for meek in heart. The smoke ascends
To heaven as lightly from the cottage hearth
As from the haughty palace. Who aright
Ponders on true equality, may walk
The fields of earth with gratitude and hope;
Yet, in that meditation, will he find
Motive to sadder grief, when his thoughts turn
From nature's justice to the social wrongs
That make such difference betwixt man and man.

Oh for the coming of that glorious time,
When, prizing knowledge as her noblest wealth,
And best protection, this universal realm,
While she exacts duty to law, shall admit
An obligation on her part, to teach
Them who are born to assist each other.
Binding herself by statute to secure,
For all the children whom her soil maintains,
The rudiments of letters, and to inform
The mind with moral and all other truth,
Well understood and practised—so that none,
However destitute, be left to droop,
By timely culture unsustained, or run
Into a wild disorder; or be forced
To drudge through weary life without the aid
Of intellectual implements and tools;
A savage horde among the civilized,
A servile band among the lordly free,

I believe that our estranged and divided
ashes shall unite again; that our separated
dust, after so many pilgrimages and trans-
formations into the parts of minerals, plants,
animals, elements, shall at the voice of god
return into their primitive shapes, and join
again to make up their primary and prede-
stinate forms.—*Dr. Brown.*

ARREST OF MESSRS. ROBINSON
AND FINLAY, OF EDINBURGH,
FOR BLASPHEMY.

WE have not received, until this week, any
authentic particulars of the above circum-
stance, and are now compelled to postpone
the communication of our friend, "W. B."
until next week, a great portion of our
present number being in type when his
favour came to hand. We may, however,
state, that on Saturday, June 3rd, the shops
of Mr. H. Robinson, publisher, and Mr.
Thomas Finlay, librarian, were entered by
the procurator fiscal, and a search made for
infidel or blasphemous books. Mr. R. was
too ill to be removed from his house, and
three officers were appointed to watch him
night and day. Mr. Finlay was taken to
gaol. On Wednesday, the 7th, bail was
tendered and taken—two sureties of £50
each, in each case, when the officers were
removed from Mr. R.'s house, and Mr. F.
liberated from gaol.

Mr. Finlay is an infidel of old standing,
an honest working man, who, in the early
times of Carlile, was a zealous disciple, and
a bold propounder of sceptical principles in
Edinburgh.

In the *Penny Satirist* of the same week
as the *Oracle of Reason*, the first in May,
there is an illustration relating to the para-
graph on the royal birth and the death of the
Duke of Sussex. The royal tigress and her
cubs are exhibited by Peel and Goulbourn to
John Bull, the Duke of Wellington, the
trumpeter. The letter-press is merely an
enlargement of the paragraph, the same
ideas and the same words are in both. Is
there any mesmerism in the communication
of ideas between T. P. and the writer in the
Penny Satirist?

LIBRARY OF REASON.

This Day is Published,
THE LIFE OF SPINOZA.
ONE PENNY.

The *Weekly Dispatch*, in a notice of the "West-
minster Review," from whose pages the above life
is extracted, says: "There is an admirable article on
the life of the illustrious and immortal philosopher
Spinoza. . . . The life of Spinoza attracts most of
our attention. He was the son of Portuguese Jews,
residing at Amsterdam, where he was born in 1633,
the reign of our Charles I. He was brought up
religiously, but even when young he began to be
sceptical, and had the moral courage to assert that
the bible contained no doctrine of a future state.
This great philosopher, of course, became the
victim of persecution. He afterwards was, for a
short time, a calvinist—then a mennonist—then a
thorough deist—and, at last, an atheist, under
which persuasion he published his great philosophi-
cal work, 'Tractatus—Theological Politicus.'
Almost two centuries have elapsed since this cele-
brated work first appeared, and Spinoza's name is
still of the highest authority."

Printed and Published by THOMAS PATERSON,
No. 11, Bolt-court, Fleet-street, London.
Saturday, July 1, 1843.

ORACLE OF REASON:

Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE"

First Editor—Charles Southwell, imprisoned for twelve months and fined £100, for Blasphemy in No. 4.

Second Editor—George Jacob Holyoake, imprisoned for six months, for Blasphemy.

Third Editor—Thomas Paterson, imprisoned for one month, for Blasphemous Placards.

Vendors—George Adams, imprisoned for one month for selling No. 4; and

Harriet Adams, his wife, arrested for selling No. 25.

No. 82.]

[PRICE 1D.

ANTI-PERSECUTION UNION.

PUBLIC MEETING.

ON Monday evening, June 26th, a public meeting was convened at the Rotunda Rooms, Blackfriars-road, for the purpose of rendering an account of the labours of the Anti-Persecution Union, furnishing a statement of accounts, resigning office on the part of the committee of management, and determining on the propriety of dissolving or continuing the Union. The meeting was presided over by Mr. HETHERINGTON, who, after stating his gratification at what had been already done, and his willingness whenever called on to aid the movement to the extent of his means and ability, introduced

Mr. RYALL, Secretary of the Union, who read the following

REPORT

OF THE ANTI-PERSECUTION UNION.

The Anti-Persecution Union is essentially a practical association. Its sphere, action. It promulgates no theory, supports no system, recognises no doctrine, and acknowledges no sect or party in preference to any other. Considering that no one man or body of men possesses all truth, that it is only through the utmost freedom of discussion that truth can be obtained, and that none, whether in the majority or minority, should obstruct another or dictate to another, either in the holding or promulgation of opinions, it has been organised to proclaim and to maintain to the utmost the practical recognition and enjoyment of the so-much vaunted and so little understood "right of private judgment." Its purpose is to obtain for all the free publication of opinion, without regard to matter or manner, convinced that nothing further is required for the eliciting of all desired truth than for opinion to clash with opinion, and withal the only legitimate way of overthrowing error.

The only claims on the Union for assistance are oppression or persecution, endured by any for the expression of opinion, without regard to sect, party, or condition, who may

be too weak to protect themselves, too unpopular to command public sympathy, or too uninfluential to obtain the aid of the magistracy, the executive, or the legislature. But it is when these high authorities, abdicating their proper functions, and becoming, instead of guardians, persecutors and oppressors, that a defensive and protective association becomes of paramount importance and utility. It was on an occasion of this kind, when systematic and formal persecution, under the name of law, was carried on against Charles Southwell, for the publishing of opinion, that the nucleus of this Union was formed, under the designation of Mr. Southwell's Defence Committee. The continuance of the barbarous interference with liberty of expression, as well as threatened proceedings of a similar kind, led to the formation of an association, which should watch over and protect the interests of liberty in this department.

The continued exertions of the Union have been rendered necessary by the successive persecutions of Harriet Adams, George Adams, George Holyoake, and Thomas Paterson, who, having been singled out as victims, might have been sacrificed or crushed but for the present organisation.

The wishes and approbation of the friends of freedom were speedily evinced by the support which arrived in frequent, and mostly small, subscriptions from bodies of operatives in all parts of the country.

The business of the committee of the Union was to facilitate the collection and manage the receipt and disbursements of these sums, for the benefit of those who were marked out as victims and for the cause generally—to obtain the best legal or other advice and assistance, or facilitate their attainment—to soften the hardships usually incurred by the relatives or dependants of those who have been bold enough and honest enough to publish their opinions though ever so repugnant to established dogmas or philosophies—and to record, for the information of the public, and for future reference and use, the proceedings arbitrarily adopted against free speakers, also to become part of the Union's duty. This latter was largely ef-

fectured by engaging talented reporters on the public press, to take notes of the proceedings in each of the courts against Southwell, Holyoake, and Paterson, which resulted in the publication of their respective trials. In this the Union acknowledge with much gratification the assistance of several ardent and munificent friends of freedom, in its genuine acceptance.

The most arduous duty, and one which, from the atrocious circumstances connected with it, most needed powerful combination for resistance, was the case of Paterson, who was subjected to the most vile and tyrannical wresting of the law, to purposes not even contemplated, either by the law, bad as the law is, or its framers. It is now considered by all enlightened and just men to be a national reproach to us that the so-called crime of blasphemy should be made the subject either of statute or common law in the way of punishment. How much greater the iniquity when a law is strained and warped from its avowed purpose to succumb to bigoted clamour and infuriated intolerance. Such is precisely the case of the last-named victim on whom was accumulated the most unredressed overt attacks, both in person and property, flagrant judicial injustice, and wanton penal outrages, which the account of the proceedings before and after the Bow-street hearing in the published trial fully detail. The most memorable instances of judicial turpitude are recorded in the Bow-street proceedings. One instance out of the mouth of a magistrate fully shows the outrageous character of this last persecution, and the cunning and fraudulent scheme for putting down freedom of expression by smuggling the publication of opinion into an act intended merely to take cognisance of common police offences, as street nuisances and obstructions.

When we hear a magistrate uttering such a sentiment as this—"He thought without straining the meaning of the words of the act very much, though it was a very large power that had been given him by the legislature, he might put a construction on the words hostile to the defendant"—what shall we think of our chance of protection from such sources?

By this, as well as numerous similar cases, is seen what licentious abuses authority would perpetrate when unchecked either by an honest legislature or a sound and enlightened popular sentiment. For this reason especially did the last case, in the opinion of those entrusted with the management of the affairs of the Union, become specially fitted for their protection. The able assistance of Mr. Thomas the barrister was obtained, and strenuous exertions made to direct public attention to the foul proceedings.

By the printed report of the entire receipts

and expenditure more particular information will be afforded of the proceedings as they occurred in the order of time.

The total amount of receipts which passed through the hands of the committee have been,
 Receipts *.....£153 15 3½
 Expenditure 142 0 4½

Leaving a balance of £11 14 11

The present juncture, in which the affairs which had occupied the attention of the committee have been brought to a close, appears to them most fitting for their retirement. In resigning to the present assembly the trust reposed in them by a former public meeting, they would offer a few words in recommendation of a future course. Reasons, based on a careful consideration of the present aspect of the times, concur in inducing the committee to consider that the present organisation of the Union should be continued and systematised. The condition of the law, the temper of the legislature, the practice of the courts, and the state of public opinion afford but slight grounds for the expectation of a speedy and complete reformation. Even now, events in Edinburgh, in which seizures of person and property have taken place, show the necessity of united action. With opposition so great and so powerful, progress cannot be expected to be rapid. But the magnitude of the difficulties render combined effort still more necessary. The attacks at Edinburgh and the events likely to result would afford a fair field for the exertions of some known and intelligent men whose leisure and abilities have been hitherto untaxed in this career of utility. The newly-stimulated energies of a committee, composed wholly, or at least partly, of fresh men, might give a powerful impetus to the cause, not only in the rendering assistance to the persecuted, but in forming a more enlightened public and legislative opinion on the subject of free discussion.

In conclusion, the committee need add nothing further than the reiteration of the concise statement previously put forth of the views and aims of the Anti-Persecution Union.

Its principle.—The right of free publication of opinion.

Objects.—The promulgation of such principle, and the attainment and maintenance of that right.

Means.—The organisation of an association for the periodical or other collection of funds, to be managed by a committee selected by the subscribers.

M. RYALL, Sec.
 Office, 40, Holywell-street, Strand.
 26th June, 1843.

* Large sums have been received at Birmingham, Bristol, Sheffield, &c., which are not included in the above. £300 would not be much under the total.

Mr. PATERSON came forward and moved the first resolution, to the effect, that "The Report be received." He entered into a detail of the reasons inducing him to take the part he had—the persecution of Southwell—the difficulty of finding a person willing to risk the publishing of the *Oracle*—and the necessity of urging forward the infidel-publication vendors and publishers generally, who would be re-assured by seeing still more ultra works than their own openly sold without hesitation. He also found that the increased public interest manifested at the opening of the Holywell-street Oracle office rendered necessary increased efforts, which were accordingly manifested in the adoption of the system of shop-placards to still further disseminate the species of knowledge (atheistical, of course) which he was desirous of preading. Thence resulted the celebrated placards, the subsequent proceedings at Bow-street, his felon-like imprisonment, and the aid and assistance of the Union, whose services on this as well as on previous occasions he considered fully entitled them to the approbation of the meeting. In his recital of some of the placards a strong and very general feeling of approbation was evinced by the meeting.

Mr. POWELL seconded the resolution, which was put and carried.

The next resolution was—"That this meeting view as unjust and impolitic all arbitrary interference with the free expression of opinion."

This was supported by Mr. SOUTHWELL, with his characteristic fervour and enthusiasm. He delivered an effective address, which was responded to by general exclamations, mingled with some sounds of approbation on the part of some few individuals, who appeared to have joined the meeting for no other purpose. He then retired, for the purpose of leaving London to join the Edinburgh freethinkers.

After the resolution was seconded by Mr. KELTON, some opposition was offered to the mode in which it had been supported, which, Mr. SOUTHWELL rose for the purpose of showing, had nothing whatever to do with the merits of the right of free discussion, which might, with equal propriety, be supported by the atheist, theist, religionist, or non-religionist, each being fully at liberty to bring to bear whatever arguments he thought forcible, without consulting infidel faithful.

It was then proposed by Mr. HOLYOAKE, seconded by Mr. RUFFEY RIDLEY, "That, for the protection of unrestricted freedom of publication, both oral and written, which, in the present imperfect state of the law, is continually liable to be invaded—self-protection has become absolutely necessary, and a powerful and intelligent union for this

purpose would be the most effectual, both for resistance to present and anticipated outrage, as well as to prevent it entirely by a change in the law."

The meeting ultimately determined, after a resolution, brought forward by Mr. RYALL, that the Union should continue, and that a committee should be forthwith appointed. After the proposals of various individuals to fill the offices of committee men, the following were chosen—Messrs. THOS. POWELL, DAVIS, THOMAS PATERSON, GEORGE J. HOLYOAKE, RUFFEY RIDLEY, CAROLINE HORNBLLOWER—and received authority to add to their numbers.

The meeting was full, and was obviously composed of advocates not only of free discussion, but almost wholly of decided supporters of anti-religious sentiments and agitation.

M. RYALL, Secretary.

HARMONY OF THE GODLIES.

II.

IN sober truth, religion is a melancholy thing. It inflames the passions, warps the judgment, and is the continual opponent of progression. "He that believeth not shall be damned," is its language and its philosophy. Were religion founded in truth, it would not require so many means of support, but would rely on human reason. Hobbes, rightly called theology, "the kingdom of darkness," for dark enough, in all conscience, it must be to the believer, who reflects *ever so little* on the absurd and contradictory evidences and doctrines of this so-called science—for the advocates of the *natural* assert the immutability and uniform operation of the deity's works, while the unnatural, or revelation-tribe, assert that god has repeatedly upset his own works, altering or suspending the operations of nature, which, as the tale goes, he once pronounced "very good." For instance, the Jew-book, that precious compound of absurdity, represents the deity as occasionally stopping the sun, parting the seas and rivers, raising the dead, and other ravings, which utterly controvert all the ends of the natural theologian—but let them speak for themselves. Bishop of Bristol's Ecclesiastical History, page 297, says, "That a traditional revelation must be supported by satisfactory *historic* proof—for otherwise a revelation could not be a foundation for faith, as faith would then be the evidence of things not only *not seen*, but of things that were *never* seen by any human being. 2. No revelation can be true, that contradicts the evidence of our *senses*—3. or is contrary to the first *principles of reason*. And, 4. It is no revelation, unless it is plainly and clearly expressed." Let us

now apply these tests, briefly, from evidence indisputable even by goddists, to these rules.

Where is the proof of the *existence* even of the supposed author of the five books of the pentateuch, other than in these books? There is none, and the evidence of the tales contained in these books have been long set at naught by astronomy, geology, and physiology. Ten entire books of the bible are excluded by the swedenborgians, and, according to "Belshams Evidences," "What is genuine, bears but a small proportion to what is spurious, in the books of Moses. So negligent have been the Jews in the preservation of their sacred books, that many of them are irrecoverably lost, and the manuscript copies which they possess are so deplorably defective, that the variations in the Bodleian MSS. from Vanderhooght's Hebrew bible, amount to 14,000."—*Atheism*, vol. 4th. According to Dr. Kennicott's collations, which the pious would fain suppress, "The most ancient MSS. we have were not written earlier than the tenth or eleventh century of the christian era, and all of them have been regulated by the (modern) Jewish masora!" So much for *historic* proof.

We never knew a revelation that did not contradict the "evidences of the senses," or that was not "contrary to the first principles of reason," nor can I see the necessity for a revelation unless it did, for surely there is no necessity for revealing what is evidenced by the senses, and that can be no revelation that requires revealers, hardly two of whom reveal alike, in fact, the subject is unworthy of a serious examination—for, as has been stated already in the *Oracle*, the Jew-book "Revelations are pretences, whose miracles are cheats, whose inspiration imposture, whose scriptures are forgeries, whose traditions are false, whose prophecies are guesses."

But, say the natural theologians, granting the obscurity of revelation, physical proof steps in and aids it, and thus we have established a stronghold, from which it is impossible to dislodge us, "We look through nature up to nature's god." Dr. Buckland, through his scientific spectacles, reads us a lesson on revelation, as given to us in the proofs of design and contrivance in the formation of strata, and the wonderful confusion, mental and physical, existing on the globe, all of course ordained for god's glory and our bewilderment, hear him:

"With respect to the animal kingdom, we acknowledge with gratitude, that, among the higher classes, there is a certain number of living species which are indispensable to the supply of human food and raiment, and to the aid of civilised man in his various labours and occupations; and that these are endowed with dispositions and faculties which

adapt them in a peculiar degree for domestication; but their number bears an extremely small proportion to the total amount of existing species; and with regard to the lower classes of animals, there are but very few, among their almost countless multitudes, that minister either to the wants or luxuries of the human race. Even could it be proved that all existing species are serviceable to man, no such inference could be drawn with respect to those numerous extinct animals which geology shows to have ceased to live long before our race appeared upon the earth. It is surely more consistent with sound philosophy, and with all the information that is vouchsafed to us respecting the attributes of the deity, to consider each animal as having been created first for its own sake, to receive its portion of that enjoyment which the universal parent is pleased to impart to each creature that has life: and, secondly, to bear its share in the maintenance of the general system of co-ordinate relations, whereby all families of living beings are reciprocally subservient to the use and benefit of one another. Under this head only can we include their relations to man; forming, as he does but a small, although it be the most noble and exalted part, of that vast system of universal life, with which it hath pleased the creator to animate the surface of the globe.

"It was a necessary and peculiar function in the economy of the fish-like lizard of the ancient seas to ascend continually to the surface of the water in order to breathe air, and to descend again in search of food; it is a no less peculiar function in the duck-billed ornithorhynchus of our own days to perform a series of similar movements in the lake and rivers of New Holland.

"The introduction in these animals of such aberrations from the type of their respective orders, to accommodate deviation from the usual habits of these orders, exhibits a union of compensative contrivance so similar in their relations, so identical in their objects, and so perfect in the adaptation of each subordinate part, to the harmony and perfection of the whole, that we cannot but recognise throughout them all the workings of one and the same eternal principle of wisdom and intelligence, presiding from first to last over the total fabric of creation."—pp. 184-186

"If the existence of contrivance prove the exercise of mind; and if higher degrees of perfection in mechanism are proof of more exalted degrees of intellect in the author from whom they proceeded, the beautiful examples which we find in the petrified remains of these chambered shells afford evidence coeval and co-extensive with the mountains wherein they are entombed, testing the wisdom in which such exquisite

contrivances originated, and setting forth the providence and care of the creator, in regulating the structure of every creature of his hand."—pp. 345-357.

"The existence of contrivance" does prove the existence of brain, but Dr. Buckland forgot to prove *contrivance* in "the duck-billed ornithorhynchus," and therefore he takes for granted what he ought first to have proved. What a pity such ingenuity should be thrown away, but Burns says "the best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft a' gleg."

Fraser, in a review of "Irons, on Final Causes," very pithily replies to this designing argument thus, "That there is design in nature, and that god is the author of it, ought not to be doubted. The only question is, is the *natural* reason of man sufficient to guide him to this truth? It may fearlessly be answered in the negative. As the terms design and designer are relative, the proof of one is sufficient for the other. Is there design? That is the point to be demonstrated. Adaptation is not design; though a high degree of adaptation would render design probable, but only probable. The constant appeal to facts of fitness can, of itself, prove nothing *certainly*. Ridiculous mistakes have arisen by some people sagaciously imputing design to others when nothing of the sort was meditated. Unless the arguer and the designer have considerable mutual knowledge of each other, error is impossible, or rather unavoidable. Our author well asks, what the smuggler thinks of the design of the statesman in bidding contraband goods to be seized, and what the poor manufacturer of the legislator's design in taxation? We may guess the internal design of an agent, if he move not in too remote a sphere: but to guess is not to know; in order to knowledge the designer must *reveal* it. And as design must necessarily exist in a mind, a fair and adequate judge of an argument from design must be a being who can read minds. He who searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men, is the only adequate judge of human designs. Who, then, shall judge? And, as if acting on the old Lancashire plan of "when down keep him down," Dr. Ellis, in his "knowledge of divine things not from reason," says, "There is *no chain* of natural causes to know god by his works. Reason cannot discover a single attribute of god; nor do the scriptures suppose the gentiles capable of attaining such knowledge." When doctors disagree, who shall decide—who test the validity of their various pretensions? Alas! each party so well demolishes the positions of the other, they do not leave a chance for infidels to come into the *melée*—perhaps it is best, after all, to let them fight it out.

The very questionable orthodox Paley, in his much lauded and industriously circulated "Natural Theology," tried hard to establish spiritual dogmas on natural proofs; he says "If I find a watch, I infer a watchmaker—so from the wonderful mechanism of the universe, I am led to believe in an omnipotent artificer." Indeed! How did you come to imply that the watch had a maker, Paley? Because, as Ensor very willingly remarked, Paley "had the ditto in his pocket," therefore by pulling it out, he saw the mechanism similar, and inferred a maker similar, but how would this apply to the human being, who never saw nor heard of a watch? Let the Reverend Mr. Irons answer:

"When Campbell shewed his watch to a group of savages, they started back with horror, thinking it, at first, from its sound and motion, a living and almost supernatural thing. It would, therefore, seem that a man who knew nothing of our division of time, and had never seen a watch before, would not, from merely examining it, apprehend the design of it, nor argue to a designer. The savages, in fact, could not understand the use of a watch, even when explained to them. Analysis failed them, for want of the previous knowledge of the synthetic experience—and this no man can obtain but by becoming himself an artist, who, when genuine, always works synthetically, not analytically. The natural man is not an artist."

Paley could only know from experience that the watch had a maker, but by what stretch of analogy could he infer the making of a world from the making of the watch? He had seen or known watches were made, but never worlds. The watchmaker is a cause, the watch the effect. Both are parts of the universe, we trace them both—but where and what is the cause of external or internal of the effect, the universe? What experimental knowledge have we of a god and his toy, the world, as we have of the watch and its maker? None, whatever—and all arguments founded on the assumption of a god, fall to the ground. Farther on Paley says, "Nor would it, I apprehend, weaken the conclusion, that we had never seen a watch made—that we had never known an artist capable of making one." Neither would it, Paley, if we had seen similar things made, or known similar things to be made by intelligent artificers—but the conclusion would be worse than weakened—would never have been entertained if we had never seen or heard of such pieces of mechanism being designed by intelligent contrivers. "Every indication (says Paley) of contrivance, every manifestation of design which exists in the watch, exists in the works of nature, with this difference on the

side of nature, of being greater and more—I mean that the *contrivances* of nature surpass those of art.” All of which, Paley, is downright nonsense, and I more than suspect you knew so when you penned the above, it is taking the whole subject in hand for granted, and drawing unwarrantable conclusions. The operations of nature may be, and are greater and more beautiful in degree, but not on *that account* designed. Adaptation is not design. Neither do the *contrivances* of nature surpass the *contrivances* of art—for however man may be compelled through ignorance to resort to *contrivances*, the form is inapplicable to nature, contrivance implying not only intelligence, but clumsy intelligence. The unnatural-natural theologians have swept away all evidence from nature of a god’s existence—and even those who most believe in his existence, show that the proof of such a being is a work of almost insurmountable difficulty—and even Paley admits that “the existence of the deity is left to be collected from observations which every man does not make, which every man, perhaps, is not capable of making.” And I know Paley is right, and I imagine, despite of “Bridge-water Treatises,” “and natural theologians,” with the chicanery and sophisms theologians usually resort to, “to stretch a point or gain a plack,” god-belief is on the wane, and ere long we hope to sing a requiem over its prostrate remains. T. P.

ARREST OF MESSRS. ROBINSON AND FINLAY, OF EDINBURGH, FOR BLASPHEMY.

To the Editor of the Oracle of Reason.

Deadly power
Has fixed its seal upon the lip of truth.

Edinburgh, June 14th, 1843.
SIR.—On the morning of Saturday, the 3d of June, the shops of Mr. H. Robinson, publisher, and Mr. Thomas Finlay, infidel librarian, were consecrated by the presence of the procurators fiscal for the county and city of Edinburgh. Mr. Robinson was first pounced upon. That gentleman’s house is behind his shop, and he was then, and had been for some days previous, confined to bed. Notwithstanding this, the legal rapine commenced—shelves, drawers, book-cases, boxes, &c., were ransacked in the name of the lord. For four hours the pillage was kept up, and everything seizable huddled into a holy wallet of godlike dimensions. The defenders of the faith afterwards proceeded to the bedside of Mr. Robinson, who emitted and subscribed a short declaration. Three officers were then instructed to watch by the bedside, night and day, until Mr. R. could be taken to gaol, without endangering

his well-being; fearful, no doubt, that the soul might wing its way to another world, before the body had been sufficiently flagellated in this, and orders were issued to the effect that no one should be allowed to see, or approach Mr. Robinson.

Matters having thus assumed a bearing of importance and tangibility, the war-whoop was raised in the camp of infidelity, and unbelieving veterans brushed to the field. Infidels, whose energies had become stagnant in the cause, from the rarity, in this quarter, of that most vivifying agent—*prosecution!* Measures were instantly set on foot for having our friend bailed out of his own house! that is to say, for having the seraphim and cherubim of God’s Edinburgh criminal force removed from Robinson’s bedside. After a vast waste of time, consequent upon the “glorious uncertainty of the law,” and its formulæ, and after several “bloody sweats,” coursing from official to official, the matter was carried through on the following Wednesday (the 7th), and I am happy to state that, since the flight of his celestial guardians, Mr. Robinson has so improved in health, as to be again at his duty. The bail was fixed, after a consultation with the crown-counsel, at £50. When the indictment is served, I shall communicate the terms of it to the *Oracle*.

Mr. Finlay, having occasion to call on Mr. Robinson on the morn of the eventful day, found the premises under the surveillance of the *posse comitatus* above referred to. Having said something in reference to the predal force going on in his friend’s shop, which the fiscal for the city judged to be too pragmatistical, and at the same time, perhaps, too pertinent to be borne, that functionary demanded the speaker’s name. Mr. F., with much simplicity, said, “I am Thomas Finlay, the infidel.” “O, ho!” exclaimed the fiscal, “you are the very person we want; be kind enough to remain where you are.” He did so, and in a short time two men entered, who had been sent on a predatory excursion to Mr. Finlay’s shop, bearing with them some choice bait for snaring yahoos. The prisoner was then escorted to the county buildings, where he underwent a short examination. He was immediately thereafter bundled into a black hole *below ground*, of mouse-trap dimensions, which was elegantly furnished with a pallet of stubble, and three blankets (?) torn to ribbands! Here, for four days and nights, Mr. Finlay was subjected (unauthorisedly) to every species of petty annoyance which the brutal ingenuity of a ferocious turnkey could invent. On Wednesday he was finally examined before Mr. Sheriff Tait, a gentleman much respected in this city from his bland disposition, urbanity, learning, and impartiality as a judge. This examination

over, Mr. F. was conducted to the Calton gaol, where, like a common felon, on entering, he was soused head and ears into a tepid bath, to cleanse him of heterodoxy, I suppose; and, after a vigorous champoing, consigned to the fraternal care of one of the turnkey genus, who exercised his wits (and unauthorisedly, too, it was discovered, as in the former instance) in the production of everything that could render Mr. Finlay miserable during his stay in the "stone jug." After twenty-four hours' misery, Mr. Finlay was liberated, a bail bond to the extent of £25 having been subscribed by two friends on Thursday last (the 8th), and he is again in the midst of his family as ardent as ever in the cause.

Having now waded through the whole acts of these cases, I must remark that, on the whole, parties did not encounter so much intolerance, insult, or injustice, from the authorities here, as our friends have invariably done on the other side of Tweed. Scotsmen have hitherto had the reputation of being, in matters of faith, the very personification of intolerance, but my own experience in these matters, even among what are denominated the "sincerely religious" (another term generally for "sincerely bigoted"), enables me to wipe off that stigma by giving it an uncompromising negative; and were the judicial records of Scotland to be unsacked for blasphemy prosecutions to a period of fifty years back, I do not think there would be found another case but that of James Affleck, sentenced in 1824, by justice clerk Boyle, to three months imprisonment for vending the theological works of Paine and Palmer; a sentence far more lenient, certainly, than any of those so recently inflicted upon our English martyrs. Since Affleck's prosecution, the works of Paine and Palmer have been sold here publicly, and with impunity. Indeed, I am authorised to state that Mr. Robinson himself sold four thousand copies of *Paine* in one year, in the city of Glasgow alone! So much then for Scottish toleration.

In conclusion, I have reasons for saying, at the present prosecutions are far from being congenial to the feelings of those engaged in carrying them through. The authorities have been driven to them by the opportunities of a few fanatical priests. This circumstance may tend to palliate the conduct of those gentlemen in the estimation of "surface men," and "skin deep reformers;" but I hold for myself, that those who not possess the moral power of openly and fearlessly expressing *officially*, that abhorrence and indignation which they make scruple of expressing *privately* of such measures as the present, deserve not the slightest sympathy, respect, or countenance, when placed in the anomalous position of

being constrained in their official capacity to act in contrariety to feeling; and thus, in the present instance, while it cannot be denied that the authorities might, and could have been, far more stringent than they were, so elastic is the principle on which they act, yet, it is the duty, as I hope it is the desire, of every hater of tyranny, and of every hater of priestcraft, and of every hater of error, to enter the lists, and throw down the gauntlet to all tyrants, though armed cap-a-pee with power, to meet with scorching ridicule, and scorn all priestly attempts to crush the free expression of opinion, and to encounter the dragon of error wherever it may appear. I therefore call upon all good men to counsel us, to unite with, and to aid us in our opposition to the present movement. Let us fight and dispute every inch of ground with the holy "powers that be." No flinching, no compromising of principle, but honest, straightforward, and resolute action. Too long has the lash of the tyrant scourged the bleeding back of slavish humanity—too long have we cringed to the brazen-faced messengers of almighty—too long, indeed, has mankind been tossed in the barque of ignorance upon the sea of chaos, with the priest at the helm, a prey to every hurricane of superstition, and every quicksand of error. Rise then, friends of freedom! arm yourselves with truth! the bombshell of the law is preparing for us. Have the weapons of reason prepared, and none will dare to make you afraid.

Yours, in the cause,

W. B.

NOTICE.

Communications for the *Oracle* to be addressed to 40, Holywell-street, London.

Received—"Repeal of the Union," in reply to W. J. B., "The Burnley God, the Coventry God, and G. J. H. the Second Priest of the Oracle," also "Mr. Fleming's Anti-Theological Discussion Resolution," by a Coventry Socialist Lecturer. "Geological Revelations," by a Believer.

LIBRARY OF REASON.

THE "Library of Reason" is published by the proprietors of the *Oracle of Reason*, which paper it is well known has for its objects the demonstration of the reasonableness and utility of atheism, and the folly and wickedness of religion. It aims to eradicate the effeminacy of piety, and cultivate the manly independence of virtue—to show the completeness of morality for promoting happiness, and the sufficiency of reason as the guide of human conduct. In this path the "Library of Reason" will tread, and these desirable ends its pages will be calculated to achieve. The "Library of Reason," will consist of reprints of rare and valuable works, which are either out of print or too expensive for the general reader.

Now ready, "A SHORT AND EASY METHOD WITH THE SAINTS," by G. J. HOLYOAKE. 4d.

Divinity has catch'd
The itch on purpose to be scratch'd.

Hudibras.

LONDON THEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION.

THE meetings of this association are attended by greater numbers than can, at their present place of meeting—Bailey's Coffee House, near Compton-street—be conveniently accommodated. Measures are about being taken to secure a building to be devoted to the especial objects of the institute. At the last meeting, a class was formed for the purpose of enabling the younger members to extend their views efficiently. I subjoin a prospectus of this class, and Mr. Editor, you will oblige many of your friends by giving it insertion in your useful periodical:

IMPROVEMENT CLASS

OF THE THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE,
*For the study of Literary Composition,
Logic, and Oral Investigation.*

Conducted by Mr. G. Jacob Holyoake.

PROSPECTUS.

Literary Composition.

Plato intimated, over the door of his academy, that no one ignorant of geometry could do honour to his philosophy; so, on the threshold of this prospectus, it may be intimated, that no one ignorant of his own language, can do honour to this class, or attain excellence in its pursuits.

All excellence in literary composition is contingent upon correctness of grammatical knowledge. Bishop Louth properly said, that a competent grammatical knowledge of our own language is the true basis on which all literature ought to rest.

No department of knowledge is like grammar. A person may conceal his ignorance of any other art—but every time he speaks, he publishes his ignorance of this. Other arts may be practised occasionally, but the art of speaking must be practised continually. Is it not strange that what all must do hourly, few care to do correctly? There can be no greater imputation on the intelligence of any man, than that he should talk from the cradle to the tomb, and never talk well. For these reasons the conductor will aim to make the members of his class sound, practical grammarians—and for this purpose he will divest grammar of its useless technicalities—present its details without complication, and its principles without mystery.

Logic.

To reason is to state facts. True logic is in accordance with the wise apothegm of Newton, that whatever is not founded on phenomena is hypothesis, and has no place in experimental philosophy. All sober reasonings must be founded on experience; reasoning on any other data is folly. It was through overlooking this that the old logicians erred. The logic of the school was a labyrinth in which the most subtle

lost their way—a bourne from which few travellers after truth ever returned. Aristotle gave us the fictions—Bacon the facts of logic. If to what Bacon taught, is added what Whately has expounded, the result is that logic which Locke correctly styled, the art of discovering and communicating truth. Investigation and rhetoric are thus combined in one system, whose details are so clear as to leave little to be doubted, and yet so comprehensive as to leave little to be desired. There is no necessity to fear that this study will prove dry or uninteresting, because from what is learned, care has been taken to select what is useful. And that which is strictly useful is in itself agreeable, and can always be made attractive.

Oral Investigation.

It will be primarily impressed upon every member, that all investigation must commence without prepossession, and end without dogmatism—that each should be more anxious to explain, than to defend, his opinions.

It is a great fact that though truth may be discovered by research, it can only be established by debate. It is a mistake to suppose that it can be taught successfully by itself. We can only acquire knowledge by comparison—we can only learn truth by contrast. It is only when opposed to error that we witness truth's capabilities, behold all its beauties, and feel its full power.

Oral investigation claims especial attention because, to a great extent, it ensures that its results shall be carried into practice. The pen develops principles, but it is the tongue that chiefly stimulates to action. It remains but to say, that each member will be instructed to speak with that confidence which good intention awakens, and with that manliness which independent thinking inspires—with that perspicuity which conveys the proper meaning, and with that force which imparts the suitable impression.

Temporary place of Meeting, private room, Bailey's Coffee House, 42, New Compton-st., Soho. For further particulars see circulars.

G. J. H.

LONDON THEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

—At the weekly meeting of this institute on Tuesday, June 27, Mr. Holyoake read paper "On the argument of design, as propounded by Dr. Paley." At the conclusion of the reading, Dr. Lodski, Mr. Callow, Mr. Ryall, and other gentlemen, took part in discussing the merits of the views set forth by Mr. Holyoake. But it may be fairly said that the principal positions taken in the paper, were not shaken by Mr. Wright, Mr. Cohen, or Mr. Callow, the gentlemen who spoke in opposition.

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THE
ORACLE OF REASON:
Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE"

First Editor—Charles Southwell, imprisoned for twelve months and fined £100, for Blasphemy in No. 4.

Second Editor—George Jacob Holyoake, imprisoned for six months, for Blasphemy.

Third Editor—Thomas Paterson, imprisoned for one month, for Blasphemous Placards.

Vendors—George Adams, imprisoned for one month for selling No. 25; and

Harriet Adams, his wife, arrested for selling No. 4.

No. 83.] .

[PRICE 1D.

RELIGIOUS KILKENNY CATISM.

IN a series of discourses by the Rev. Orville Dewey, religious pastor of the United States, some very forcible remarks are made concerning the influence of religion. The following are so appropriately descriptive of one of the results of religious training, as to merit repetition :

"In a celebrated volume of essays published some years ago, you will remember one 'On the aversion of men of taste to evangelical religion.' The aversion is there taken for granted—and, indeed, it is sufficiently evident. Whether the taste be right, or the religion be right, the fact of their contrariety is indisputable. The whole body of our classic literature—that literature with which the great mass of readers is constantly communing and sympathising—is stamped with nothing more clearly than an aversion to what is called evangelical religion. The peculiarities of its creed, of its feelings, its experiences, its manners, its tones of speech, have all alike been offensive to that taste which is inspired by the mass of our best English reading." It is equally true that in every age, men of science and general information have not—cannot be sincere believers in the Jew-book. The anatomist and physiologist *must* look with contempt on the mosaic fable of the origin of man and his helpmate—must look in vain for the existence of a soul as a distinct existence, before or after life. The moralist cannot admit the virtuous tendency of the Jew-god's savageisms. The astronomer laughs at the assertion of the sun, moon, and stars, being MADE—"the moon standing still, and the sun not going down for a day," to indulge the wonder-loving Jews. The phrenologist, knowing the brain is the substance from which all the mental phenomena emanate—that it is the seat of the sensations appertaining to the feelings and appetites, as well as perceptions—that when certain parts of the brain are injured, a corresponding defect in the brain-faculty is the consequence—cannot assent to the free-will dogmas of sacred ignoramuses. The geolo-

gist knows the age of the world is above 6000 years, and the noachian flood an absurdity, as is well put by W. Sidney Gibson, in his "Certainties of Geology." On the consistency of geology and revelation he thus speaks :

"Upon certain points, with regard both to the doctrine of the creation and of the deluge, the generally received interpretation of the mosaic text can no longer be entertained consistently with the facts established in geology, and must therefore be abandoned, but that it is susceptible of altered interpretation, and that, for many considerations, it is clearly liable to correction, by the ascertained results in the actual phenomena of the globe.

"As to the doctrine of the deluge—that, although the phenomena of the globe infallibly testify that frequent changes in the relative situations of land and sea have taken place, and that the submersion, by the waters, of land previously existing above their surface, has been for periods of lengthened duration, and that these changes have been accompanied by circumstances relating to organic life, which prove their occurrence at distinct intervals of time; yet, that these facts do not disprove the occurrence of the tranquil inundation described in the mosaic narrative, because, on a comparison of their respective characters—indicated as regards the geological deluges by the phenomena of nature, and as regards the noachian deluge by the statements of the mosaic record—the events cannot be identified with each other in any respect.

"That the *assumed* universality of the noachian flood is not disproved by conclusions established in geology alone—but that considerations arising on the text itself, on the laws of nature, and on physical facts, must forbid our adhering to that interpretation of it, which involves the doctrine of the universality of the flood at one time over the globe, and, in fact, justify our interpreting the statement that the flood covered the whole earth, *to mean* the whole earth then known to man."

Here, at one fell-swoop, has Mr. Gibson cut revelation from under the feet of the

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evangelicals, and of course he has been duly denounced by the descendants of the apostolic fisherman, as infidel, atheist, enemy to revelation, and what not. Some of their compliments he doubtless deserved, for if he is one of the god-supporters, which he professes to be, the priests may well cry "save us from our friends." These very reasonable statements of the geologists have put the truly orthodox to their wits' end, to arm themselves with arguments, as antidotes to such damnable heresy.

These Roger praise-the-lords have endeavoured, with vast ingenuity, to show the beautiful harmony of geology and all ologies with scripture, hence so much of the godly twaddle introduced into this and other sciences. Some have deemed such humbug harmless, and fancied that mankind would discover the chicanery, and discard it. Again, men of science must eat, and the pietists while professing to hold the keys of heaven, in reality grasp those of earth, or earth's treasures. Gospel is nothing in their estimation without gold, and for a little of the latter, the scientific must cram in a great deal of the former—for the elegancies, dignities, and enjoyments of this earth, philosophers have turned theosophers, and have found it better to tack theological quackery to their science, than, by opposing it, to starve. This has been the alternative in all ages with men of science, who, unfortunately for humanity, seldom have been strong-nerved enough to publicly expose the errors they have privately discarded.

Throughout this dreary retrospect, the contemplation of bold and undisguised efforts towards the establishment of unadulterated truth, yields us the highest delight. Such a course as that of Lawrence in his early career, of Engledeue, of Elliotson, with some other congenial spirits, should, if such were needed, afford the most powerful stimulus to renewed or increased exertions on the part of those who can furnish their more humble contributions to the great cause of truth.

A ceaseless fire should be kept up on the evil tendency of all religion. We must display to the slumbering world the tremendous evils inflicted on it by god-belief. The priest, whose trade is falsehood, must no longer be permitted, unexposed, to teach that black is white, crime innocence, and innocence crime. We must continually teach that religion, laying claim to a knowledge of the infinite incomprehensible, and unnatural, is the main obstacle to any reform in our social or political condition.

How faithfully, how spiritedly, a god-worshipper can descant on some of the dreadful evils of god-worship, the following from the same source as the first quotation will excellently show :

"Alas! how little has there been in the religion of past ages—how little in the prevalent forms even of the christian religion, to draw out, to expand and brighten, the noble faculties of our nature! How many of the beautiful fruits of human affection have withered away under the cold and blighting influence of a scholastic and stern theology! How many fountains of joy in the human heart have been sealed and closed up for ever by the iron hand of a gloomy superstition! How many bright spirits—how many comely and noble natures—have been marred and crushed, by the artificial, the crude, and rough dealing of religious phrensy and fanaticism!" Such is religion's horrid tendency according to one of its own professors—one who may be credited for sincerity in this matter, and from *his* account alone, its effects are "broken hearts" here, and excruciating punishments hereafter.

Now hear one more, and, Kilkenny cat-like, let one devour the other—it will leave us less to do: "A dissenting minister is invested with no authority, is subject to no rules, has no creed or confession of faith, and there is, therefore, no guarantee for his orthodoxy, and no remedy for his heterodoxy. To admit such men is to offer a bonus to cobblers to leave their stalls, and turn preachers, to tailors to profess holy orders, and to every enthusiast who works himself into the belief that he has a call from heaven, to commence preaching." (Frazer.)

T. P.

THE ETHICA OF SPINOZA.

(From the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.)

THE "Ethica" are divided into five parts, which treat in order—concerning god; concerning the nature and origin of mind; concerning the nature and origin of the affections; concerning human subjection, or the force of the affections; concerning the power of the intellect, or human servitude. As the author professes to tread in the footsteps of the geometers, and to deduce all his conclusions by rigid demonstration from a few self-evident truths, he introduces his work, after the manner of Euclid, with a collection of *definitions* and *axioms*. These are couched in terms generally ambiguous; and therefore the reader will do well to consider attentively in what sense, if in any, they can be admitted; for it will not be found easy to grant his premises and at the same time refuse his conclusions. His definition of substance, for instance, is so expressed as to admit of two senses; in one of which it is just, whilst in the other it is the parent of the most impious absurdity. We shall give it in his own words; def. 3., "Per substantium intelligo id, quod in se est, et per se concipitur: hoc

est id, cujus conceptus non indiget conceptu alterius rei, à quo formari debeat." (By substance I understand that which is in itself, and is conceived per se, that is, the conception of which does not require the conception of anything else as antecedent to it.) If by this he meant, that a substance is that which we can conceive by itself, without attending to anything else, or thinking of its formation, the definition, we believe, will be admitted by every reflecting mind as sufficiently distinguishing the thing defined from an attribute, which, he says, is that which we perceive of a substance, and which we certainly cannot conceive as existing by itself. Thus the writer of this article can shut his eyes and contemplate in idea the small quarto volume now before him, without attending to anything else, or thinking of its paradoxical author, or even of the great being who created the matter both of him and of it; but he cannot for an instant contemplate the yellow colour of its vellum boards without thinking of triple extension, or, in other words, of body. The book, therefore, is a *substance*, because conceivable by itself; the colour is an *attribute* or *quality*, because it cannot be conceived by itself, but necessarily leads to the conception of something else. But if Spinoza's meaning be, that nothing is a substance but what is conceived as existing from eternity, independent of everything as a cause, his definition cannot be admitted; for every man conceives that within himself thinks, and wills, and is conscious, as a substance; at the same time that he has the best evidence possible that he existed not as a conscious, thinking, and active being, from eternity.

His fourth axiom is thus expressed, "Effectus cognitio à cognitione causæ dependet, et eandem involvet." (The knowledge of an effect depends on the knowledge of the cause, and includes it.) And his fifth, "Quæ nihil commune cum se invicem habent, etiam per se invicem intelligi non possunt, sive conceptus unius alterius conceptum non involvit." (Things that have nothing in common with each other, cannot be understood by means of each other, that is, the conception of one does not involve the conception of the other.) The former of these propositions, so far from being self-evident, is not even true; and the latter is capable of two senses very different from each other. That every effect proceeds from a *cause*, is indeed an axiom; but surely we may know the effect accurately, though we be ignorant of the *particular* cause from which it proceeds; nor does the knowledge of the one by any means involve the knowledge of the other. If different things have nothing in common, it is indeed true that the knowledge of one of them will not give us an *adequate conception* of the other; but it will in many cases compel us to believe,

that the other *exists* or has existed. A parcel of gunpowder lying at rest has nothing in common with the velocity of a cannon-ball; yet when we know that a ball has been driven with velocity from a cannon, we infer with certainty that there has been a parcel of powder at rest in the chamber of that cannon.

It is upon such ambiguous definitions and axioms as these that Spinoza has raised his pretended demonstrations, that one substance cannot produce another; that every substance must necessarily be infinite; that no substance exists or can be conceived besides god; and that extended substance, or body, is one of the infinite *attributes* of god. We shall not waste our own time or the reader's with a formal confutation of these impious absurdities. We trust they are sufficiently confuted in other articles of this work; and whoever wishes for a more particular examination of the author's principles, may find it in Dr. Clarke's "Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God." The truth, however, is, that no man will need the assistance of that eminent metaphysician to discover the fallacy of the reasoning by which they are attempted to be proved, if he affix *any one precise meaning* to the definitions and axioms, and adhere to that meaning steadily through the whole process of the pretended demonstrations.

By way of apology for this jargon, it has been lately said, that "Spinoza takes the word *substance* in its most simple and perfect sense; which is necessary, as he writes mathematically, and proposes a simple idea as the foundation of his theory. What is the proper signification of a substance? Is it not that which stands alone, which has the cause of its existence within itself? I wish that this simple meaning of the word could be universally admitted in philosophy. Strictly speaking, no worldly thing is a substance; since all mutually depend on each other, and finally on god, who, in this exalted sense, is the only *substance*. The word *modification* sounds harsh and improper, and therefore it cannot be expected to gain a place in philosophy; but if the school of Leibnitz may term matter the *appearance* of *substances*, why may not Spinoza be allowed a bolder term? Worldly substances are kept in union by divine power, as it was by divine power that they had existence. They represent also, if you please, *modified* appearances of divine power; each according to the station, the time, and the organs, in and with which it appears. The phrase used by Spinoza is concise, and it gives a unity and simplicity to his whole system, however strange it may sound in our ears." (Herder's Dialogues Concerning God).

From this account of spinozism, one who had never looked into the works of the au-

thor would be led to suppose that his system is the same with that of Berkeley ; which, denying the existence of material substance, attributes all our perceptions of what we call the qualities of body to the immediate agency of the deity on our minds. But Spinoza's doctrine is very different. According to him, bodies are either attributes or affections of god, and as he says there is but one extended substance, he affirms that substance to be indivisible, and employs a long scholium to prove that those are mistaken who suppose it finite and not *essential to the deity*. That we do not misrepresent his sentiments, the learned reader will be convinced by the two following definitions, with which he introduces that part of his ethics which treats of the nature and origin of mind. "1. Per corpus intelligo modum, qui dei essentiam, quatenus, ut res extensa consideratur, certo et determinato modo exprimit. 2. Ad essentiam alicujus rei id pertinere dico, quo dato res necessario ponitur, et quo sublato res necessario tollitur; vel id, sine quo res et vice versa quod sine re nec esse nec concipi potest." (1. By body I understand the mode or modification, which expresses in a certain and determinate manner, the essence of god, as far as extension is considered. 2. I say that that pertains to the essence of substance, which being granted, the substance is necessarily placed, and which being subtracted the substance is necessarily taken away ; or that without which the substance, and *vice versa*, that which without substance cannot be, nor be conceived.) In conformity with these definitions, he attempts to prove that god is an extended, as well as a thinking, substance ; that, as a thinking substance, he is the cause of the *idea* of a circle, and, as an extended substance, of the *circle* itself ; and that the minds of men are not substances, but certain modifications of the divine attributes ; or, as he sometimes expresses it, "Quod humanæ mentis actuale constituit, est idea rei singularis actu existentis." (What actually constitutes human mind, is the idea of each substance actually existing.) Hence, he says, it follows that the human mind is a part of the intellect of the infinite god ; so that, when we speak of the human mind perceiving this or that, we can only mean that god, not as he is infinite, but as he appears in the human mind, or constitutes its essence, has this or that idea ; and when we speak of god's having this or that idea, we must conceive of him not only as constituting the human mind, but as, together with it, having the idea of something else. In another place he tells us, that the human mind is nothing but the *idea* which god has of the human body as actually existing ; that this *idea* of the body and the *body* itself, are one and the same thing ; and that thinking and extended substances are,

in reality, but one and the same substance, which is sometimes comprehended under one attribute of the deity, and sometimes under another.

If this impious jargon be not atheism, or, as it has been sometimes called, pantheism, we know not what it is. According to Spinoza, there is but one substance, which is extended, infinite, and indivisible. That substance indeed he calls god ; but he labours to prove that it is corporeal ; and there is no difference between mind and matter ; that both are attributes of the deity variously considered ; that the human soul is a part of the intellect of god ; that the same soul is nothing but the idea of the human body ; that this idea of the body, and the body itself, are one and the same thing ; that god could not exist, or be conceived, were the visible universe annihilated ; and therefore that the visible universe is either the one substance, or at least an essential attribute or modification of that substance. He sometimes indeed speaks of the *power* of this substance ; but when he comes to explain himself, we find that by power he means nothing but blind necessity ; and though he frequently talks of the *wisdom* of god, he seems to make use of the word without meaning. This we think evident from the long appendix to his 36th proposition ; in which he labours to prove that the notion of final causes, is an idle figment of the imagination, since, according to him, nothing but the prejudices of education could have led men to fancy that there is any real distinction between *good* and *evil*, *merit* and *demerit*, *praise* and *reproach*, *order* and *confusion* ; that *eyes* were given them that they might be enabled to *see* ; *teeth* for the purpose of chewing their *food* ; *herbs* and *animals* for the *matter* of that *food* ; that *sun* was formed to give light, or the *ocean* to nourish *fishes*. If this be true, it is impossible to discover wisdom in the operations of his *one substance* ; since, in common apprehension, it is very characteristic of folly to act without any end in view.

Such are the reveries of that writer, whose works a German philosopher of some name has lately recommended to the public, as calculated to convey to the mind more just and sublime conceptions of god than are to be found in most other systems. The recommendation has had its effect. A literary journalist of our own, reviewing the volume in which it is given, feels a peculiar satisfaction from the discovery that Spinoza, instead of a formidable enemy to the cause of virtue and religion, was indeed their warmest friend ; and piously hopes that we shall become more cautious not to suffer ourselves to be deceived by empty names, which those who *cannot* reason (Sir Isaac Newton and Dr. Clarke, perhaps) give to those who can

(Hobbes, we suppose, and Spinoza). But though we have the honour to think on this question with our illustrious countrymen, we have no desire to depict Spinoza as a *reprobate*, which the critic says has often been done by ignorance and enthusiasm. We admit that his conduct in active life was irreproachable; and for his speculative opinions, he must stand or fall to his own master. *His ethics* appear to us indeed a *system shockingly impious*.

PETITIONING.

THERE is a humility and abjectness in petitioning, which is ever unfavourable to morality. It matters not whether the objects we address be gods or men, the debasing effects are the same. The men who demand to be petitioned, raise themselves into tyrants—while they who comply, sink into slaves. Generous men ask not for petitions—independent men never offer them. What is just should be given when it is asked for—what is not just should never be granted when prayed for. The chartists should set a better example. I say the chartists, because all useful reforms rise in the bosom of society—among the lowest class. It has always been so—they have always originated the best principles, and those above them have always reaped the reward. The principles of complete suffragists have been born and bred, fought and suffered for, by despised chartists. We condemn them for their violence, reproach them for their vulgarity, and despise them for their poverty—but we adopt what they have toiled to establish. We serve them as we do bees—we take their honey, and turn them out of their hives, and, if it suits our purpose, *bury them alive*. To chartists must be commended a generous example. They are brave enough to act it out. To memorialise is better than to petition government. If you do not think that the lower house of parliament, is the “honourable” the commons of Great Britain, do not say so. Leave out the word honourable, and simply address them as the commons. Never say that your memorialist “*humbly* sheweth,” or you will not deserve what you do show. None but cowards and slaves are humble. None but guilty men ought to be. If you would have your rulers generous, treat them so. Do not find fault with them for being tyrants, while you crouch before them as slaves.

Some time ago the chartists of Bristol memorialised the queen. I either moved or seconded the adoption of the memorial, but objected to the hypocrisy of calling the queen most gracious majesty, when they did not believe she was gracious, and most certainly wished she was no majesty, and of “*humbly* presenting,” when they had no such feeling.

It was said, that the memorial would not be accepted unless the slavish form was complied with. I suggested then that the next memorial to her majesty should commence thus, “May it please your most gracious majesty to permit us to say, that we doubt whether you are gracious, that we wish you were not a majesty, and to humbly represent that we are not humble at all.” This language would certainly be justified by chartist teachings and chartist convictions. If any memorial, couched in the plain language of sincerity was rejected, because contrary to the forms of the house, or of royalty, remonstrate against the perpetuation of such forms. The country would respond to the complaints of men who would not stoop to hypocrisy. Obsolete forms, created in the days of ignorance, would give way before the stern and earnest language of honesty. The maxim is a sound one, that when rulers treat men like savages, they make them savages. It is equally true, that while men approach their rulers like sycophants, they keep them tyrants. Remember this, our rulers now withhold liberty, on the ground that the many are not prepared for it. If freedom then is to be achieved, men should lose not a moment in showing themselves worthy of it in every way, and capable of appreciating it in every form. Let this never be forgotten—that no men have a right to expect the language of honesty from their rulers, while they persevere in addressing the language of hypocrisy to them.

G. J. H.

DELUGES.

IN the newspapers, the other day, appeared the following paragraph, “Frightful inundation, loss of upwards of four thousand lives.—A letter written by a Jew of Tricala, the chief town of Sandjac, in Thessalia, gives an afflicting account of an inundation, by which between four and five thousand persons perished. According to this statement, many of the largest trees were broken down by the weight of the many people who climbed up to their tops to escape the flood.”

This account, it appears, was written by a Jew, and surely *he* could not have forgotten his god, Jehovah’s, covenant, attested by the rainbow in the case of the deluge of Noah. It is true, perhaps, that this Jew, and other souls around him, had no personal reason to complain—but, to the four or five thousand who actually perished, the whole world might as well have been destroyed.

What thought those Jews or christians on the tree-tops, if, haply, the image of the most recent “*bow in the clouds*” recurred to their minds? Surely, they must have been prompted to exclaim, “This is a lying and deceitful god!” Talking of the rainbow, I wonder if a well-educated Jew or

christian exists, who has credulity enough to believe that the action of light upon a shower of rain never produced "the arch of heaven," prior to the mosaic deluge—before old Noah stepped out of his ark, and "took of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings," from which "The lord smelled a sweet savour, and said in his heart, I will not any more curse the ground for man's sake."

By the by, one would have thought there could not have been a very "sweet savour," nathless the "burnt offering," when so many stinking carcasses lay festering around. But nothing is said about these—Moses forgot to relate the "decent interment" of the corpses that were left above the mud and slime, after "the waters assuaged." Oh! but, exclaims the orthodox receiver of "the divine legation of Moses," the dead were *naturally* interred in the disruptions of the soil. Indeed! Then how is it that at least one human skeleton of the antediluvian era does not grace every geological museum in existence? Besides, as animal bodies are now constituted, they invariably rise to the surface of the water, after being drowned a certain number of days. It strikes me, moreover, that if "all flesh" met with an *earthy*, as well as a *watery* grave, Jehovah might as well have made an earthy job of it altogether—and, taking Noah and his menagerie to heaven for a while (in a huge balloon, perhaps) produced a universal earthquake—one that would have put the recent affair at Guadaloupe quite into the shade.

"The lord smelled a sweet savour!" It is not the fashion to make "burnt-offerings" now-a-days, or "the lord's" olfactory nerves might be similarly gratified in Thessaly, and his lordship be induced to make a promise that four or five thousand of his human creatures should not be drowned again—till next time, when *natural causes* should render such a catastrophe inevitable.

Natural causes! (How one thing leads out of another!) It was in this very country, called Thessaly, or Thesalia, that the deluge of Deucalion took place—the account of which believers in "the BIBLE" would have everybody believe is a mere fable, founded upon the *impossible-to-be-fabulous* narration of Moses.

There was the deluge of Ogyges, too, by which Attica remained waste above 200 years—and we could enumerate a great many other deluges, if it were worth while, tending to prove that such things are not of very rare occurrence, and that, therefore, the "word of the lord" is not worth a rush.

And be these juggling fiends no more believed,
That palter with us in a double sense;
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope.

DIAGORAS ATHEOS.

REPEAL BY ASSASSINATION.

To the Editor of the Oracle of Reason.

Glasgow, 37, S. Portland-street, June 28.

DEAR SIR.—The appearance of an article in No. 78 of the *Oracle*, in which a systematic assassination of the episcopalian clergy of Ireland is deliberately recommended—and the printing of another article, to the same effect, in No. 80, have given the friends of free inquiry in Glasgow much pain and surprise. The coolness with which murder is advised, induced us at first to think that the adviser was indulging a strain of irony, that he was satirising the inhuman promptings of priests and bigots. But, on further consideration, we find, to our sorrow, that there is reason for believing W. J. B. to mean literally what he writes. This will delight our enemies, who will rejoice to have "oracles" of infidelity, thus confirming the calumnies of the pious. Atheism and barbarity, scepticism and ruthless cruelty, reason and lack of common sense, free inquiry and murder, shudderings at Jewish atrocities and sanctionings of the slaughter of christians, are here placed in most harmonious combination, as if intended to put a weapon in the hands of orthodox declaimers upon the tendency of infidelity. The articles in question would be convincing additions, by way of appendix, to the sermon on modern infidelity by the Rev. Robt. Hall. Do the editor and conductors of the *Oracle* sanction the savage sentiments of their contributor? If not, let them at once disavow their approval, and inform the public that the articles were inserted because it is the plan of the paper to admit the expression of any opinion, however outrageous it may be. There may have been periods in the history of nations when a recourse to arms was necessary for the recovery of freedom—and we admire the men who shed their blood on the battle-field, in a patriotic cause. But the state of society in the United Kingdom is such in these times as to render physical force, as a means of reform, highly impolitic and positively fatal. This fact is now seen by the least intelligent of the chartists; and the Irish, ignorant as they are, seem to be aware of it. If, in former times, when liberty was contested for at the peril of life, respect was given to the courageous contenders, still in no age would men of noble hearts feel anything but contempt for the sneaking, cowardly assassins of W. J. B.'s recommendation. A moment's reflection will surely convince your contributor that an attempted massacre of any of the established authorities, would be revisited tenfold upon the people themselves were it possible for them to become the dupes and victims of such oracular counsel. The age is beyond pikes and guns, as instruments of human regeneration.

Yours, sincerely, HENRY JEFFERY.

BASE AND COWARDLY ASSASSINATION.

To the Editor of the Oracle of Reason.

MR. EDITOR.—But a brief time has elapsed before the public have witnessed the evil effects of your recommendation to use physical force, in redress of grievances. In Wales, the cultivators of the soil had to complain of excessive tolls, turnpike-gates placed everywhere, preventing them carrying manure to their fields. Instead of appealing to justice, and showing the advantages of living in society, they actually adopted the worst features of assassination—they dressed themselves up as women, that they might not be detected, and suffer the consequences of their crimes—they met at night, and laid the unoffending turnpike gates level with the ground. The landlords and the magistrates met, removed some of the gates, lowered the tolls, and, when one sufferer brought up some men, whom he had seized in the act of assassinating his gate, the justices advised the complainant to desist from the prosecution of the case, as he had been in the habit of exceeding the toll, though marked upon the board, and was liable, by act of parliament, to heavy penalties. The collector said he had always been accustomed to levy the higher rates, and his predecessor before him, and it was necessary to remunerate him for his contract with the trustees of the road, and pay them interest on their money.

Now, Mr. Editor, it is scarcely necessary to point out to your readers, that the proper course of proceeding would have been to have lectured the trustees of the roads, the magistrates, and the landlords, the lessees of the gates, and the turnpike men, and to have reached to the people patience, until their masters had been brought over to give them their rights, redress their wrongs, and grant them many little indulgences besides. The growing evil of the conduct of the people, the fatal example they have given, is specially seen in their fresh demands—from the successful adjustment of turnpike-gates, they have proceeded to enforce the abolition of taxes, of poor laws, and union bastilles, a reduction of rents, and alteration of the land taxes. This is a pretty bill of fare, and no doubt when they have proceeded physically to digest these several courses in the banquet of revolution, they will have up, as I assert, an equitable adjustment of the national debt, a reform in our commerce, colonies, and manufactories, and lay the foundation of social establishments throughout the country. I need not say that it would be consistent with the principles of socialists, to accept a gift procured in such a manner—the powers of persuasion alone should oblige robbers to cease from plundering, and when

two-thirds are agreed, are as one mind, and even moral as well as physical antagonism has ceased, the new moral world will come into operation. But the object of my letter was intended to be confined to facts, the demonstration of the working of your atrocious sentiments, and the evidence that not only atheistic intolerance and suicidal bigotry was called into play, but that superstition, in a horrible instance, has first acted upon your advice. There has been a great controversy in the parish of Shoreditch, in London, as to two golden candlesticks which were presented by some unknown individual to be put upon the altar. The parish had petitioned the parsons, curates, and bishop—the vestry had remonstrated in meetings—the candlesticks still remained there. One morning, going into the church, the first sight seen were the two candlesticks stretched on the ground, and the tapers broken. These ornaments are rendered unfit for further service, and unless the pious individual restores them to life, and the clergymen sanctions their re-establishment, this stumbling-block of offence is not likely to be in the way of tender consciences. But, since the murder of Thomas a Becket before the altar, I do not recollect such an instance of vile assassination, a stab too upon the feelings of those in favour of the candlesticks, as well as upon the persons of the innocent offenders. The assassins of Becket were proud of their sacrilege, and gloried in the vengeance they had taken, while those who have brought to an untimely end the candlesticks, did unperceived their business, and have not revealed themselves. Had it happened in time, it would have been a subject for the historical cartoons, now exhibiting in Westminster Hall, and intended to adorn the new houses of parliament. The mangled remains of the unfortunate tapers and stands, and the horror depicted in the countenance, of the Shoreditch puseyites, who left them where they found them, to bring down judgment upon the heads of the vestry, who met at that very moment to petition the Bishop of London against the introduction of popery—and the ministers to whom was entrusted the salvation of their souls, would have made fine groups for the historical painter or the *Illustrated News*. Not only such doctrines and practices as the above are spreading, but the rulers take a perverse delight in giving way to the clamours of the people, when they show a threatening attitude and promise action. The friends of the present ministry, who began elatingly to declare that Ireland was no difficulty in the way of Peel, as he himself had anticipated—who declared that no more concessions were to be made to Ireland, but justice was to be done to the orangemen, who had been so long out of place and power—now, when they

see force must be opposed to force, begin to talk of compromise with popish priests. Actually, the *Standard* proposes to give over the people and the land, bound hand and foot, to two establishments—what is now voluntary they suppose to make legally binding on the part of their parishioners towards roman catholic clergy. The other day I opened a work on the universities, translated from the German, the English editor, who is Greek professor at the college at Manchester, and was at Oxford, speaking of reforming that university, says, "Concessions are now only to be obtained by acting upon the fears of the government." Verily all the governed seem adopting the maxim of Bentham, to make the ruling few uneasy. Hoping you will eschew all rash counsels and precipitate resolves, that you will lay aside passion and listen to reason, and that you will trust to time, I am, Mr. Editor,

A CONSTANT READER

Of the *Oracle of Reason*, and, in faith, hope, and charity, like Patience, sitting on a monument.

THE BURNLEY GOD—THE COVENTRY GOD—AND G. J. H.

To the Editor of the *Oracle of Reason*.

IN No. 79 of your paper there is an article entitled "The Socialist God"—it should have been, according to the views of your present correspondent, entitled the socialists' gods, for certainly no two gods ever differed more than the gods of Burnley and Coventry. Indeed, the astounding qualities of the Burnley god* throws quite into the shade the god of the Coventry socialists. Let the qualities of the two gods be placed side by side, for the purpose of ascertaining whether the organ of comparison is small in the cranium of G. J. H., or whether he has been guilty of misrepresentation or not. The following is an extract from the address of the socialists of Coventry:

"Many of you believe that socialism teaches that there is no god. As a proof of the falsehood of this belief, we beg to refer you to the first of those propositions now known by the name of the rational religion, by which you will find, that socialism distinctly declares, the existence of a creative, governing power, known to the nations of the world by various names, in this country by the name of god. In stating thus much, socialists have declared all that is known on the subject—what can men do more? To go farther than this in our affirmations, is to declare ourselves presumptuous, ignorant teachers of mankind. Under these circumstances, we ask, is it advisable for men to lose their time and money in carrying on theological dis-

putes, when the evils of society are continually on the increase, and the time and money required to remove these evils in the shortest possible period. And why, above all things, should men quarrel, persecute, and malign each other, because they happen to differ in opinion on this mysterious, and, comparatively speaking, unimportant subject? Socialists do not attach the same importance to theological—supernatural—doctrines as their opponents, and, therefore, the latter have concluded that the socialists must, of necessity, reject them under every form and every name. To remove the misconception on this subject, is one of the objects of this address.

"Again, many of you believe that the socialists deny the existence of a future state—socialists do nothing of the kind. That they think it unwise to employ thousands of priests to teach this doctrine, and pay them near £20,000,000 per annum for doing so, when they might be better employed, is quite true—that they know these teachers to be ignorant of the subject, is also true; but it forms no part of socialism to affirm or deny the existence of a future state. Socialists find, by experience, that the teachings of theologians serve but to show that shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it, tending to perplex, but not to inform and liberalise the human mind."

Let any one compare the above statement with the "Outline" of the rational system, and they will find the one the echo of the other. A COVENTRY SOCIALIST LECTURER.

H. U., president of the Burnley branch of socialists, writes us upon the same subject as follows:

"I was surprised when I received the last week's *Oracle*, to find that Burnley was the place which was alluded to in No. 79, headed "The Socialist God," and immediately made inquiry if any thing of the kind had been put out by them, but found that no one remembered any thing of the kind, in fact, socialism was only just beginning to be known in this town, at that time, it being in the latter part of that year when a society was formed, we therefore think that it must be a mistake on your part, or, at least, if any thing of the kind was issued, it was without the consent of the society as a body."

NOTICE.

Henry Sculthorpe's Report accepted.

SUBSCRIPTIONS,

For the *Anti-Persecution Union*.

Northampton £0 17

Library of Reason, No. IV., "On the supposed Necessity of Deceiving the Public." By J. Hibbert

Printed and Published by THOMAS PATERSON
No. 40, Holywell-street, London.

Saturday, July 15, 1843.

* The socialists of Burnley, as will be seen by the next communication, deny the issue of any such address as that mentioned by G. J. H., in 79.—ED.

THE ORACLE OF REASON:

Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE"

First Editor—Charles Southwell, imprisoned for twelve months and fined £100, for Blasphemy in No. 4.

Second Editor—George Jacob Holyoake, imprisoned for six months, for Blasphemy.

Third Editor—Thomas Paterson, imprisoned for one month, for Blasphemous Placards.

Vendors—George Adams, imprisoned for one month for selling No. 25; and

Harriet Adams, his wife, arrested for selling No. 4.

No. 84.]

[PRICE 1D.

POLITICS FOR POLITICIANS.

IV.

If, therefore, you are *not* determined to resist without ceasing, to endure all without flinching, never to be weary, nor to submit, keep your chains and renounce a liberty for which you are unworthy.

De La Mennais.

TRUE morality consists, not in "not injuring a human being," but in never neglecting an opportunity of benefitting one. This is the duty and *true interest* of all—but our duties and true interests are neglected, as our gaols, bastiles, and our starving population testify. Do the majority know that numbers of their fellows are *literally dying of want*, or committing crimes on purpose to receive felon's fare? Pope raved "of the nobility of man," but were man not the most contemptible of animals, he never would crouch like a spaniel, whenever tyranny threatened him with physical force, for daring to ask for a little more of the produce of his own labour.

Force is what a humane mind detests. There can be no moral beauty in the strivings of brute force with brute force, or in the hellish struggles for physical mastery, unless a nation's liberty is at stake. It would undoubtedly be better were force unnecessary—but when justice is infringed—when a people are enslaved—when those who frame the laws are themselves lawless*—when our baneful oligarchy are the first to unsheath the sword upon their defenceless people, and let slip the dogs of war, as at *Peterloo*—when the *apostles of peace* butcher the widow and the orphan, as at Rathcor-mac and at Canterbury—when no moral reasoning on the part of the enslaved will persuade the tyrants to loosen the chains with which they have bound humanity—then most assuredly is force not only necessary, but virtuous, and to die for a country's liberty is honourable.

Do we not observe the lords of the soil, those star-bedizened despoilers, standing fast to their feloniously obtained privileges, no matter with what force of argument or

clearness of statement their plunderings may be exposed? If the abolition of their vilely-fraudulent taxation laws, affecting the very food of the people, is proposed, they would not hesitate to plunge the nation into the horrors of civil war, to avert from themselves some diminution of their annual incomes, which the nation has hitherto so prodigally allowed them.

Such is the character of that aristocracy whose head mouth-pieces express such horror of the ravages of war, that in the event of a physical force success, they would repeat what they have so frequently done before—hung up every man, woman, and child, who endeavoured to reclaim from their thievish grasp the possessions which belong to the nation—and the industrious who till the soil, who supply the whole nation with food, clothing, fuel, and every requisite for human comfort, who have suffered themselves to be robbed wholesale and retail of their industry, and whose existence is one round of excessive toil, *continually refrain from waging war against their implacable and rampant despoilers!* How long shall this be endured? May the hour of emancipation be at hand!

The revenge of a nation that has been long and greatly injured, is, no doubt, a dreadful thing. There is power in the volcano when it bursts, and pours its lava far and wide, desolating the fair face of nature and the homes of men—there is power in the tempest, when it sweeps with fury over land or ocean—but there is a power to be feared as well as these—when a nation has willed its freedom—when the wrath of the slave bursts forth, and sweeping away the habitation of his tyrant, will utterly demolish the throne and the coronet, and hurl despotism from its seat.

Much as I detest force—and I would never recommend force for its own sake, the desire of plunder, the gratification of pique or animosity, still I would, in justice to the majority. Look at those human butchers, who have gained notoriety for the use of physical force for the basest purposes, the enslavement of humanity, and why not men for liberty? It has been

* See Holywell-street cases, in previous Nos.

said that knowledge is power, and not only is it so in itself, but it is the director and guide of every other kind or power—without correctness of thought, the energy of the body would be a dangerous thing. It is thought makes the man. The ignorant reverence wealth and rank, but the intelligent respect only the man of worth—he who has done most to humanise his fellows.

Why do the people quietly bear their oppressions? They are numerous, and influence has increased amongst them, but, alas! they are disunited through their religion, which is so crushing in its nature, that it keeps its victims in the most deplorable ignorance of their political rights, in order to enable the idle few to riot on the produce of the plundered many. Let all those who feel their degradation, set about earnestly imparting their knowledge to their fellows. Let them make their wrongs the theme of discussion. Let their watch-word be *free discussion, mutual improvement, instruction, and union*, that when captive man makes an effort for his deliverance, he may know the most effective mode of striking a decisive blow.

Some of the “easy circumstances” philosophers say, “Wait till the mass are intelligent, and then say we will be free, and it shall be so,” but they forget, perhaps they never knew, that poverty is making more rapid strides than education—that as competition extends, so does physical destitution, and as this last extends knowledge decreases. It is not necessary, however, for all to be philosophers to reform a state. The French, upwards of fifty years ago, obtained a great reformation—even at *that time* they had intelligence and bravery to prolong it for a time. An absence of the *right sort* of knowledge on their part, but more, the deplorable ignorance or villainy of surrounding nations, lost them the enjoyment of their splendid triumphs. The people of this country, urged on by wily priests and aristocratic knaves, waged war and invaded France, for the express purpose of crushing the republican spirit of her people. Since that period, France has dethroned another monarch, and scattered his armed ruffians for trampling on those they should have protected. Let us point to those examples, and prepare each other by intelligence, so, when troublesome times come, we may be in readiness to meet them. Let the despots of the earth, who have tried a people’s endurance, expect a recoil proportionate to the obstacles the people had to encounter. A people long subjected to tyranny, will in a great struggle become tyrants, though in another form—one which soon works its own extinction. This, however, is no reason we should submit to the tyranny of a few, because the many *might* be equally so. This objection will

always hold good while the many are under the monarchical influence. They imbibe despotism from the influence of the institutions we now live under, and this is itself a powerful reason for sweeping them away.

The Americans have rid themselves of the band of puerile and puny imps of monarchs and aristocrats, that once disgraced their soil—they have no standing armies, pensioners, nor law religions, although a nest of waspish dissenters are buzzing about their ears. But it must be borne in mind, the Americans gained all by physical force; could we have an equally great reformation by moral means, all the better, but, at all events, let us have it. A cheap government is better than a dear one, and the oppressed should never forget they are not powerless.

Wealth producers! recollect the true principles of morality, “the greatest happiness to the greatest number,” then think of less than a fourth of the population *producing all* for the 26 millions—and, as a consequence, these producers doomed to never-ending slavery, to support the others who are set apart as soldiers, sailors, lacqueys, beggars, thieves (little) all necessary wherever there is an aristocracy! Should an attempt be made by this producing portion to obtain what will maintain existence from their own production, the whole gang of idlers are brought out to murder the industrious by hundreds, or deprive them even of the chance of slaving, and leave them to die in some or other of the awful forms which poverty assumes in this country, while others are doomed to eke out their miserable existences, undergoing dreadful punishments in penal colonies, to avenge the ruffians they have disturbed at home. Do we think of these things and hesitate to be moral? We are ruled by the principle of fear, this principle can only then affect our rulers—they are impervious to justice. It is the duty of every good man, who wishes well to his country, to his kind, to himself, to aid in the removal of the lawless few, that the lives of millions may be saved, and happiness put within their reach.

Common sense would dictate, did not accursed religion drive sense from the brains of men, that if it is right and just to deprive of life the brigands who murder and rob for subsistence, it is surely more just to destroy those gangs of legal brigands who depopulate the earth by system, and murder by the most painful of methods. These nuisances, however, the soundness and healthfulness of democratic institutions, may soon be expected to get rid of.

Why do ye hesitate? are ye anxious to see a few more hundreds of your fellows fall by the sword—by famine—by pestilence—or maddened by the accursed Pentonville system—or murdering each other for the sake

of being hanged, as in our penal colonies? Unite one with the other for mutual protection. Drive religion to the winds, for it is only good for your oppressors—it *disunites you*—and while you are disunited you have nothing to hope for, but suffering, misfortune, and greater oppression. By what power is it that the many are ground to the dust by the few? By UNION. That is the secret of the power of the ruling few—they do not let religious nonsense get the better of their reason, and in their zeal for heaven forget earth. We are the fools, who gaping for another heaven beyond the grave, and out of our reach, have neglected the one in our power. In the words then, of one of the prosecuted placards—reason, inquire, discuss—unite, and be free! T. P.

THE REPEAL OF THE UNION.

Further Reply to "A Coventry Socialist Lecturer."

THE history of the romish church, which the socialist says would not fail to show that he has truth on his side, is the superannuated method of raising a "no popery" cry, and may be well left to the exertions and vociferations of protestant meetings in Exeter Hall. It certainly would be a wonderful history of Ireland, and would equally astonish all parties, if the socialist can show that Ireland could not have been better off the last six hundred years than it has been under the yoke of England. The only fact we have, is that the chartists and socialists were not well received in Ireland. The chartists wanted the Irish to join them in a demonstration of physical force, to which the socialist is so much opposed. Was it the time for the Irish to make that display? When the Irish are labouring to relieve themselves from the greatest tyranny which has ever existed in the world, the socialists propose to the Irish to join them in an entire new scheme, which has no less than the whole world for its object. This system is very little known, and moreover much misrepresented, in England, but the socialists want the Irish to give up all the old-established methods of amelioration in a country's condition—to renounce all the prejudices which the English, who ought to be better acquainted with the subject, have to a much greater degree, and assist in laying the foundation of the future superstructure of the new moral world. The socialist admits it would require two thirds of the population of the United Kingdom to effect any reform. Aristarchus, who has given a new view of socialism, and, according to *Tait's Magazine*, more rational, and, according to the *Morning Chronicle*, an

improvement and extension of the community system of Mr. Owen, says, "Before 'circumstances' shall have changed the general nature of man sufficiently to enable him happily to *approximate* to communism, races of men will have been consigned to their eternal dust." If it will take races of men to change circumstances and the nature of man so as to approach at all within sight of socialism, what time will it take to establish and realise the system, when it took so long to clear the ground? If this be true, it is clear that the Irish will not only have six hundred more years of tyranny, but probably their race and many other races will be extinct, before it could be "put an end to in the shortest possible period." They are to put a stop to their agitation, and wait this social solution of all their miseries—they are to give up that idea of liberty which all other people have ever held—they are to renounce those leaders who have guided them to some victories, and who promise them the immediate attainment of greater, and follow those who say, come and lay your bones with ours, and be an advanced guard of the myriads of those who will meet with the same fate, seeking an oasis in the desert of infinity.

It may be difficult to calculate the amount of injury, or the feeling with which it is received from different parties, otherwise I should have thought the greatest indignation would have been felt by socialists and infidels against the church party, led on by the Bishop of Exeter. Even personal injury, I should think, would scarcely do so much mischief to a cause as the misrepresentation of facts, and giving to any sect the credit of falsehoods which are universally received as truths. It was the old way of the world, to gain advantage from martyrdom—the under-going it is made to appear always to have been in favour of christianity. But all parties then knew, as well as now, the effects of lying and slandering, covering your enemies with infamy—the christians used such weapons against the pagans, the pagans retorted on the christians, and the surviving christians succeeded in fixing, not only the heathen, but many extinct heretics with the very crimes with which they charged each other, and were charged with as a body. Many people who never heard before of the socialists, only know them now as associated with the revelations made in parliament by Philpotts and the religious world. According to the socialist you should resent more a collision with those who are associated with you in a common endeavour to seek justice, than the combined immoral and physical ill-treatment of those who are your common tyrants. Is every allowance to be made for circumstances in the character of our tyrants, and none for our persecuted brethren, the poor Irish? I

should have thought pity would have overpowered all other sentiments, in receiving a wrong from an ignorant people, who have been so long slaves, circumstances generally said to be more deteriorating to human nature than any other. On the other hand, I should think a feeling of resentment justified by the physical as well as moral ill-treatment which infidels lately received in London, whose inhabitants it would be supposed are acted upon by circumstances most favourable to a spirit of toleration. Nevertheless, we saw last summer a crusade of the daily papers against infidels, the son of a vice-chancellor wreaking his vengeance on inanimate objects, which he threatened to have done on the living had they been there. We saw all the crimes in their turn, from acts of violence which involves murder, assassination, war, being the ends of the beginning, down to petty larceny, justified by the public and the bench. Finally, we saw a magistrate, despite of his oath to observe justice, send an individual to prison and to death, not for the offence charged against him, but for his infidelity. I cannot see why that deference should be paid to the rich and the powerful, with which Mr. Hunt, in the *Rising Sun*, charges the socialists. Those upper classes, who from circumstances are utterly unable to appreciate the views of those below them. I cannot see why lies uttered by a bishop, and in parliament, why blows and destruction of property coming from the son of a vice-chancellor, and legal assassination administered from the bench, renders the infliction sweeter and more endurable. The conduct of the whig government, the bishop of Exeter and the high church, the tories in power, the governing public and the upper-classes against chartists and socialists bid fair to be a matter of history, whilst the complaints of ill-treatment received by the chartists, socialists, and infidels, at the hands of the Irish, will soon be forgotten and forgiven, and will never be recorded in the chronicles of the nations.

Infidelity is supposed to be a distinguishing characteristic of the socialists, and, I believe, not without reason. Infidels and socialists are synonymous terms in the mouths of the many, except that there is an idea of very gross immorality attached to the latter name. It is not so much to be wondered at, when all the authorities in England had pronounced against them, when the clergy, with a bishop, had spoken their anathemas, the *Quarterly Review* had recommended their violent suppression, and the newspapers had reported actual outrages committed against them, when charges made against them, and almost universally received, were not answered, at least by any organs of equal

weight and circulation—that the Irish, who are religious and have a character to preserve, and a policy to pursue, should even renounce an alliance with socialists and infidels as well as chartists. What would be thought of philosophers who were infidels, but had an excellent scheme of society, hitherto not practically successful, but beautiful in theory, who should have gone to the Greeks, when they were fighting against the Turks, and said, as to your religion it is all false, a christian is not a bit better, if so good, as a mohammedan, lay down your arms, and when we have persuaded two-thirds of your masters, you will obtain a redress of your grievances? Supposing, too, that the character of these philosophers had gone out before them considerably to their disadvantage, should we think it extraordinary if the people they came to convert should violently oppose—a consummation not to be wished—should not at all be inclined to permit the diffusion of doctrine which might create disunion amongst themselves, which was much opposed to all their feelings, and which, if received favourably, would be no recommendation to them in the eyes of the world, who were watching the contest, and of many who were disposed to assist them. I cannot see why you should respect the feelings of the rich and the powerful. All the upper classes, say a great party, are born and educated under these circumstances, which make them entertain a great respect for religion, and you might as well, Jardine said, strike them a blow or spit in their face, as speak of their superstitious in the same language as you mention other abuses. It is atheistic intolerance attacking them, suicidal bigotry bringing punishment deservedly upon yourselves, cry all those having authority in church and state, down to those who preside in social institutions. We answer, we only claim the same right of expression for us as for you. Wigs attack tories, and tories whigs, and all political parties each other in the most offensive manner, in order to dispose each other—and in whatever way they do it, having that object in view, it must be disagreeable to their feelings, yet such a manner of carrying on the contest is given the greatest license, and the mental suffering it caused would be now thought a ludicrous excuse for an act of violence, and no necessity for the interference of government to suppress the liberty of thought and speech. We admit the upper classes and their action to be the effects of external circumstances and we take the only means in our power to remove those which we think wrong and introduce those which we consider right. The upper classes have the power and wealth and exercise authority, which we consider tyranny, we endeavour to destroy, or weaken

the influence of those circumstances, ideas, and principles, upon which the evils in society are based. We consider we have a right to work a change in our equals, using the same means they have to counteract it, or effect a conversion in our minds, much more do we think it honest and bold, as well as a right, in effecting a change, to disregard the feelings of those who have every advantage over us, and use their superiority without mercy.

But while thus pushing the right of inquiry, opposing prejudices, gaining victories over falsehood, and adding conquests to truth, I think some regard is due to the feelings of the unfortunate, oppressed, and persecuted. I think I should refrain from representing to a slave all his errors and faults, forced upon him by circumstances at the moment he is in chains, and likely to receive some proofs of corrections from his master for not patiently submitting to his servitude. Were a Roman catholic burning a protestant or a protestant a Roman catholic, I should not choose that time to tell the victim his creed is a folly. No, it appears natural to say, let it be all fair between you, and then between you two and me, and the work of investigation will go on bravely—then reason will have a hearing. W. J. B.

THEORY OF REGULAR GRADATION.

XL.

"MR. LONG, in his history of Jamaica, affirms that he never knew two mulattoes have any offspring; and he seems suspicious, that in the few instances where a mulatto-woman, married to a mulatto-man, may have had offspring, it is very probably derived from another quarter. I should, however, suppose, that numerous instances might be found where two mulattoes have had offspring; yet, certainly, the fact related by Mr. Long is sufficient to warrant the conjecture, that mulattoes, confined to themselves, are not so prolific as others. The small proportionate number of mulattoes in the West Indies and in America, compared with what they should have been if equally prolific with other people, is a striking circumstance.

"If this doctrine be admitted, it will be asked, how are we to distinguish species from varieties? In answer to this, it may be observed, that varieties are reducible to the common stock again. Thus, amongst men, Albinos are varieties which do not fail in succeeding generations to return to the common stock. In vegetables, the variegated holly, for instance, will return to the common green holly, when propagated

by seed, and can only be preserved as a variety by grafting. With respect to family, provincial, or national varieties of feature and complexion, it may be observed, that the more confined and circumscribed the intercourse of any people may be, the more they will assume and retain a sameness of appearance; by reason that every anomaly of feature is worn out, through continual intermixture with those more nearly resembling the standard. The people of every country, therefore, which has been long inhabited, and from which foreigners have been in a great measure excluded, will have the characteristics of its first settlers, who, if few in number, might entail a peculiar cast of features on their posterity. In England, where the intercourse with foreigners has been great, and consequently a great variety of features is found, we could select individuals who would entail, if circumstanced as above, the Scotch, the Irish, or other European national characteristics, on their posterity; whereas, were we to range over Europe, we should not find men likely to propagate a race of negroes or copper-coloured Americans.

"From the numerous facts which have been adduced, it must appear evident, that various differences exist in the human race; some of which are generally known—but others, it is presumed, have never been before pointed out. In the bony system, it has been shown that the head, the arms, and the feet, differ materially; characteristic differences have also been pointed out in the hair, the colour of the skin, the complexion, the being adapted to a particular climate, and the being subject to different diseases in the same situation.

"There are but two ways of accounting for this great diversity in the human frame and constitution. 1. To suppose that the diversity, great as it is, might be produced from one pair, by the slow operation of natural causes. 2. Or to suppose that different species were originally created with those distinctive marks which they still retain.

"The advocates for the first opinion, have endeavoured to account for the colour of man from the effects of the climate in which he resides. Indeed, if climate can account for any particular diversity, it must be that of colour; for it is difficult to conceive in what manner it can affect the other differences, one way or another. Some have endeavoured to maintain, that in the course of about two centuries, during which white people from Europe have resided in the torrid zone, and negroes from Africa in the temperate zone, there is a small but visible change in colour, the whites approaching a little towards black, and the blacks towards white; but they have by no means made out the fact in either case. Indeed, as has been already observed, the fact seems to be, that no gene-

ral and permanent affection of colour is produced by climate. The temporary discolouration of the skin, called tanning, seems to have no relation to the permanent colour of the skin: it arrives at its maximum a very short time after it begins, and is as soon worn off again; whereas the permanent black colour (supposing, for argument sake, it could be effected in time) must require many centuries to effect it. Thus the father, it is supposed, transmits his degree of colour to the son, and the climate still keeps increasing it; and hence, ultimately, from the climate alone, or at least from external circumstances, we are taught to expect the complete change from black to white, or the contrary, in the course of perhaps fifty or a hundred generations.

"As to the opinion, that the constitution of man may be adapted to any climate by long residence, it is not only unwarranted by facts, but is in direct opposition to all analogy, drawn from the animal and vegetable kingdoms at large.

"On the other hypothesis we can easily account for these and other diversities in the human race; or rather indeed the hypothesis itself presumes upon such diversities. Besides, we find that, in those animals which most nearly resemble man in their bodily conformation, there are a great number of species differing but in small degrees one from another. The same observation, indeed, may be extended to the animal kingdom in general. Why then should we seek to infringe this apparent law of nature in regard to man, unless to serve an hypothesis?

"The opinion here maintained, so far from degrading, tends much more to dignify the human race than the opposite one. For if, according to the latter, we admit that such great varieties can be produced in the same species as we find to exist in man, it would be easy to maintain the probability that several species of *simiæ* are but varieties of the species man; since they differ as little in their organisation from some individuals of the species, as these do from men in general. And if the argument be still further extended, almost all the animal kingdom might be deduced from one pair, and be considered as one family; than which a more degrading notion certainly cannot be entertained. But the opinion advanced above, effectually precludes any such consequences, as it places each species upon its own proper basis, and debars them from intermixing with other species, unless nearly resembling themselves, and even that in a limited manner.

"Different species of men being once admitted, it will become a proper object of physiological inquiry to determine their number and distinction, with the merits, excellencies, and defects of each. In pur-

suings this inquiry there is no doubt but gradation will afford the proper clue to direct us. What the number of species may be, is not perhaps easy to determine. The four quarters of the globe will each, probably, furnish us with at least one. In Africa, however, there seems to be more than one species; and perhaps the lowest degree of the human race resides there. I am inclined to think that hair, rather than colour, ought to guide us in that quarter; and that it is not the blackest inhabitants, but those with extremely short hair, and a most ungracious appearance, as the Hottentots, who may be reckoned the lowest on the scale of humanity. The Negro, the American, some of the Asiatic tribes, and the European, seem evidently to be different species.

"Ascending the line of gradation, we come at last to the white European; who being most removed from the brute creation, may, on that account, be considered as the most beautiful of the human race. No one will doubt his superiority in intellectual powers; and I believe it will be found that his capacity is naturally superior also to that of every other man. Where shall we find, unless in the European, that nobly arched head, containing such a quantity of brain, and supported by a hollow conical pillar, entering its centre? Where the perpendicular face, the prominent nose, and round projecting chin? Where that variety of features, and fulness of expression; those long, flowing, graceful ringlets; that majestic beard, those rosy cheeks, and coral lips? Where that erect posture of the body and noble gait? In what other quarter of the globe shall we find the blush that overspreads the soft features of the beautiful women of Europe, that emblem of modesty, of delicate feelings, and of sense? Where that nice expression of the amiable and so tender passions in the countenance; and that general elegance of features and complexion? Where, except on the bosom of the European woman, two such plump and snowy white hemispheres, tipped with vermillion?"

REVIEW.

The only Conservative System of Joint Stock Commercial and Industrial Association.
By Aristarchus.

THE writer of this pamphlet is, doubtless, "a benevolent and well-intentioned individual," as the least rotten of our rotten press say of R. Owen, with whom Aristarchus is at issue, respecting a community of goods, which he designates, "A most unsound and pernicious doctrine, like nearly all general and unlimited proposals." From this I should infer that Aristarchus thinks *his* scheme would be an effectual remedy for all

our social evils, and not a step merely to something better—for if he does not think his plan a remedy for all time, why so dogmatically pronounce of communism, which, if not suited to the present age, might be congenial to the feelings and wants of society some time hence? In p. 7, however, he admits, indirectly, the truth of the principle, or he says, "It would be very well, *if all men were sensible*"—there will surely be a time when *all* men will be sensible to their true interests, if they are not now, though those interests might not be a community of property. As evidence of the conservative nature of his system, he says, that, "As far as possible, these societies (those which he proposes) should co operate with and maintain in the *present* ecclesiastical and civil authorities." Now, if his suggestions were generally adopted, and joint stock associations were formed, with whom it was a principle support established authority, there never could be progression, for rulers only change with the change of the ruled—and if the people were determined to support that which is, there never could be a change. The established authorities of the present day are established only to protect the *present* system. If a change of system takes place, there must be change of governors, suited to the altered circumstances. A change of system can never take place, except by force, without the consent of the established authorities, and as it is pretty certain the authorities of the present day will not give their consent to so radical a change as that proposed by Aristarchus, we must either *take* what he suggests, or have other men than those now in office, to protect it when we have obtained it. If the plan of Aristarchus is intended for all time, as I conceive it is, surely it is open to his own objection against "general and unlimited proposals"—a sound objection, by the way, equally applicable to individual interests, communism, or joint stock associations, as principles of society. Political institutions are not like moral principles, unchangeable, but must vary with the ever changing feelings and wants of society—hence the absurdity of providing for the continuation of the present established authorities—the supporters of the present corrupt system, and whose interests are bound up with it—at the very moment when he is proposing to change the institutions with our present rulers have been appointed to preserve.

He has not had time to carefully study the details of Aristarchus's plan, but he would see, when treating of political and social economy, to be as sane as most men, but, I am sorry to say, when treating of religious economy, if there be such, he is as mad as any bigotted supporter of the present system, to be found in the god-gulled ranks

of the priests. He prays, in the first instance; that god may speed the realisation of his plan. If there be a god, surely he might have done it without the recommendation of Aristarchus, if he had wished so to do—and if he had not, I reckon he will "see him damned first," as Wilkes said to Thurlow, who called god to help him.

Aristarchus tells us, "Wretched, indeed, would be the mind of man, were it not for the *consolations* of religious faiths. Provident omnipotence has exalted the poetic faculty of the mind into the chief instrument of its sustenance and progression. The gorgeous superstitutions of the East, and the grandeur and solemnity of the Roman catholic worship, adopted chiefly by the European populations, show that the mind of man seeks loftier aspirations than this work-a-day world."

Yes, unfortunately, and thence his misery—man has ever snapped at the shadow and neglected the substance—has ever bewildered his brain about the future and the incomprehensible, instead of attending to the present and the understandable. Most wretchedly has man been cheated by the delusive *promises* of religious faiths, the *consolation* derivable from which is much like making a virtue of necessity—robbed of every earthly consolation, they cling to their heavenly one, as drowning men catch at straws. The gravity with which the author talks of a "*provident* omnipotence," most astonishes and amuses me—it is really seriously ridiculous. The providence of his omnipotenceship is exhibited, I presume, in the fact of a *starving* world, which requires the impotence of an Aristarchus to plentifully supply. But Aristarchus is not only a god-monger, but he is a religion-monger par excellence, for he is anxious to conserve civil authority and *ecclesiastical* authority, likewise, a matter, I think, which might have been much better left to the joint stockers, than obtruded in industrial schemes. It is quite as unnecessary and offensive as R. Owen's marriage and divorce arrangement. Men of enlightened minds admit, that if god cannot or will not take care of his own concerns and interests, we have no business to trouble ourselves with the matter—we have never yet found time to mind our own affairs through gadding after god's, only getting monkey's allowance for our pain—and "sarve us right."

Aristarchus would seem to be well acquainted with the social principles, and yet he appears to greatly misunderstand their bearing upon the question of responsibility. He says, "Until we can know what motives operate upon all our fellows, individually and collectively, it will be necessary to hold them responsible. In ignorance, according as we suspect good or

bad motives to have induced a man to an action, so we feel pleased or displeased with him for doing it. Remember that feeling pleased or displeased with a man is to hold him accountable." This is true, but the responsibility of a social government would extend only to the *prevention* of wrong, without malice—and not, as now, to the *punishment* of wrong, with malice. Again, he says, "For us to conform strictly to the social principles, we must preserve a ludicrous exactitude of neutrality, and never suffer ourselves to feel pleased or thankful to a man for doing us a kindness, or angry with one having done us any injury." This is a mistake—our feelings are involuntary, it is the ungoverned exhibition of them which socialism repudiates.

However much I may differ with these portions of the pamphlet of Aristarchus, he having the good of his fellow-man at heart, I heartily wish him success. For my own part, I would rather see a nation of well-fed, well-clothed, and kindly governed serfs, than a nation of starving freemen. I would rather see a country studded with shaker communities, than I would see it in the condition of the united kingdom—for shakerism would inevitably give place to more enlightened views, without men suffering the physical destitution under which we are labouring. I would rather by far the factory education system had been passed into a law, than that the children of our manufacturing towns were left in utter ignorance of the first rudiments of knowledge. When men know how to read, there is a chance of their reading what is useful, but when they cannot read, there is no such chance.

W. C.

"About fifteen months ago, the *Weekly Dispatch* exposed a case in which the authorities of one of the South Sea Islands, thoroughly disgusted with the animosities and vices produced amongst them by our missionaries, ordered them all to depart. An English sloop of war, however, took their part, and lending an eighteen pounder cannonade, with a body of marines and seamen, attacked the natives. Very fortunately this mode of promulgating the gospel was not successful, and our captain was killed, and our party entirely defeated. The French, on the present occasion, have been a little wiser. They sent out cannonades and long guns, with plenty of pikes, swords, and bayonets, to aid the pious purposes of the Catholic missionaries, but they at last contented themselves with extorting contributions, and sailing away with the booty."

EQUALITY.—Sir Peter Laurie's justice is 256.

not even-handed. He talked, the other day of the indecency of exposing chalk images in the streets, representing naked figures, and refused to vouchsafe redress to a poor Italian, a sufferer from the squeamish notice of some pedestrian, who thought his feelings wounded by the exhibiting of a Venus and accordingly demolished the figure. These lesser productions of the art are modelled from some of the choicest works of the great masters exhibited in our national institutions, were they are exposed to the eyes of both sexes, and yet neither the directors nor their servants ever witness any attempt to destroy them. According to Sir Peter's justice, which, in our opinion, is the extreme of injustice, any jackass might go into the sculpture room of the British Museum, and, declaring the statues indecent, commence an attack upon them, and then destroy the finest specimens of chiselling the world ever beheld. Such a man, or madman, according to Sir Peter Laurie's notion, would be perfectly justified in committing the act, and escape punishment. Thereby far greater indecency in a Scotchman running about the streets of London, every day, dressed in a kilt, and exposing his legs and thighs, and yet Sir Peter Laurie has not thought proper to direct the police to take these peripatetic wanderers in tartan and fishers to the station-house. If he had an eye to justice, these men would not be allowed to enter the city on pain of being taken in custody.—*Dispatch*.

AWFUL JUDGMENT OF GOD ON THE CHRISTIANS.—We learn that in No. Stamford, Conn., while the Revs. Messrs. Fuller and Buffet, were administering sacrament, the electric fluid entered the chimney of the church, and struck both god's servants to the floor, but without injuring any one else.—*Boston Investigator*.

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THE CANT OF CHRISTIANITY.

WE have given specimens of parliamentary cant and the sacred slang of the upper classes, and will now turn to the self-same common cant and sacred slang among the million. One of the evils of the day is that there are many messiahs and revelations of reform, and one of the most crying is that there are many apostles of christianity. So many revelations of reformers, each with their separate plans and followers, all having for their mottoes, "he who is not with me is against me," not perceiving, rather, "that he who is against me is for me," make the public distrust each other, and prevent their co-operation in the improvement and progress of society—yet with a variety of objects in view, promoting the same cause, their efforts may tend to the ultimate good. But in a different case with true christianities, where one superstition only proposes to succeed another superstition. Mr. Bronterre O'Brien, of the *Poor Man's Guardian and Peasants' Friend*, comes forward in the ample capacity of political reformer and champion of christianity. We entirely agree with him, that the monster evil of the United Kingdom is the church, but this is the consequence of religion, more especially the christian. Many true christianities have been tried and found wanting, nor have we reason to suppose that the christianity of Mr. O'Brien would not be attended with the same bad results, judging from the description he himself gives of it, and from his ignorance of its real character. Mr. O'Brien accuses his readers in attacking the parsons of the established church, by talking of "christians in practice," good practical christians, who will prove the faith that is in by their works—simply christians, they could not be wrong—Christ himself, the divine author of christianity—the good old simple christian practices of the primitive church—a return to such would be a reformation. Having sufficiently eulogised christianity, he proceeds to set up a Jesus of his own sending into the world. He says—

would try to do as he did—that if you really believe in a future state, you would not dare to raise your eyes to heaven with such a weight of guilt upon you. They see you also add blasphemy to your other atrocities—for what do you do? After helping the rich to brutalise the poor, to steep them in destitution—and often to bring them to an ignominious death—they behold you, in almost all your sermons, labouring to make your congregations believe that *it is all the work of the lord!*—that the present form of society is sanctioned by god himself as the only possible one, and that all who would alter it are infidels, visionaries, or anarchists. Will you deny all this, parsons? Will you deny, that while (for Mammon's sake) you profess evangelism, the whole practice of your lives is unmitigated rebellion against Jesus Christ? Will you deny that Jesus Christ was poor—and that you are rich?—that Jesus Christ was born in a manger, and that you would all be born in palaces, if you could?—that Jesus Christ was humble and benevolent, and that you are as proud as Lucifer, and heard-hearted as your brother Malthus?—that Jesus was a lover of truth and sincerity, and that you are persecutors of truth, and skilled in conventional falsehoods?—that Jesus Christ was a preacher of peace, and that you are ever ready, at the minister's nod, to support wars the most sanguinary and unjust?—that Jesus Christ was a hater of cant, and of pharasaical pretence, and that pharasaical pretence alone constitutes your stock in trade as christian pastors?—that Jesus Christ preached mercy, and sacrifice, and that you are strangers to mercy, exploding it for idle ceremonies, and sacrificing the poor to lucre?—in short, *that Jesus Christ was a pattern of all that is just, and benevolent, and simple, and amiable, and affectionate in human nature*, while you are examples of all that is unjust, grasping, arrogant, machiavelian, and heartless, in human nature?"

As Mr. Bronterre O'Brien abounds in general assertion, we will descend to particulars, and give a few facts. Every maxim of Jesus, and his own example, brutalised the poor. What was his conduct to his parents, and particularly his mother? did he not in-

culcate hatred of all relations, and say such would be the consequences of his religion? Does B. O'Brien think the poor are so brutalised that it would be sufficient satisfaction for their miseries, for them to see the rich howling, mourning, gnashing their teeth, and frying in hell-fire, merely because they were rich, however otherwise good? Will it be compensation enough for evils here to get places hereafter in Abraham's bosom—that they may for ever see, as Lazarus did, some rich neighbour eternally tormented in hell, and expecting all the rest of their station in society, and all their relations following, because they are not allowed to warn them that if they possessed the enjoyment of life in this world, they must go to hell in the next? That Jesus oftentimes steeped the poor in destitution, is evident from his own example and that of his disciples—he took himself and them from their several employments, to vagabondise over the country. Carpenters' trades do not appear to have been bad from over competition, and there were plenty of fish in the sea of Galilee. There seemed to be no want for those who would work—there was no famine in the land, and the Jews were very charitable and hospitable to him and his followers, from his own showing. Foreign taxation, publicans, sinners, soldiers, idlers, and the powers that be, it was his express mission to defend and support. The priesthood only say the truth, when they affirm the result of their labours, in correspondence with the preaching of Jesus, is the work of the lord—Mr. B. O'Brien does not show any truth to the contrary. They only speak the truth of the gospel when they say the present form of society is sanctioned by god himself, as the only possible one, and that all who would alter it are infidels, visionaries, anarchists, or any other name they like to call them. Mr. O'Brien should have included the only real reformers, the atheists—who would uproot the evil, not set it in the earth to grow again—having experience of its upas qualities.

It was Jesus's policy to upset everything and establish himself on the ruins, and the christian priesthood have everywhere ably fulfilled his intentions. He only preached those virtues Mr. B. O'Brien admires, that his followers might pay implicit obedience to him—he never practised them, *he* was their constant exception, as his church has ever been and ever will be, and priests would be traitors if they did not follow his example—did not Paul compose a panegyric on this, commencing, "Let every soul," &c. ? Jesus was sometimes poor, because he did not work, but he was often rich, as far as having all that money would bring—he made people give up their fortunes to him, small and large—he had a chancellor of the exchequer, Judas, and rich men followed him, and many

women administered unto him, out of their substance, not gained in a very respectable way. Indeed, sometimes he appears in the character of what we would term, who us common, and not christian, slang, a girl's fancy man. That Jesus was born in a manger or not, we leave to be decided by Mr. B. O'Brien and Strauss. Certainly the degrees in the priesthood between manger and palace are not uncommon, as all history will show. That Jesus Christ was humble and benevolent, we deny—we believe him to be an incarnation of pride, but not having an acquaintance with Lucifer, we must, in our ignorance, leave that comparison of our clergy to the more extensive theological knowledge of Mr. B. O'Brien. But to take a point of comparison, we should say Brother O'Brien behaved more humbly when he was tried, than Jesus did at his trial. That Jesus was much more guilty of using seditious language, treason, and every species of rebellion, than B. O'Brien. Brother O'Brien may argue that these illegalities proved his benevolence and humility, and that these were shown by refusing to plead, calling himself king, talking of riding clouds, and coming to judge the world, after entering Jerusalem as a king at the head of a multitude committing overt acts of violence in the Temple, and resisting all law and authority for several days, even to the arming his disciples, and cutting off a peace-officer's ear. However, we leave his benevolence to Mr. B. O'Brien, who is so in love with it, certain that if any christianity be true, especially the primitive and original, and that it is become practical, as Mr. B. O'Brien seems to wish, that Mr. B. O'Brien will have roast eternally in hell, to prove the truth of what Jesus said, and the benevolence of god whose apostle he has become.

As to Jesus's love of truth and sincerity, if he is to be the standard of truth and sincerity, we bid adieu to the words and ideas they convey, and say, woe to a people if they give their confidence to such teachers and doers of truth and sincerity. They and sincerity! when his own disciples not know what he taught—when he spoke parables on purpose to deceive—sent his disciples to preach belief in nothing, and tell the people that if they did not give an extraordinary proof of faith, they should be damned and served worse than sodomites. We do not believe that Mr. B. O'Brien would think it sufficient to say to the poor, follow me—if he is on the look-out for followers, he has good reason to hold up to the people the example of primitive, practical christians, such as Jesus thanked his father for giving him—babes, fools, and sucklings. The conventional falsehoods of our priesthood cannot exceed those of Jesus, whose whole teaching was a series of quibbles.

falsification of passages from the old Jew-book, the manufactures of ridiculous answers to inquiries, or of still more absurd interrogatories—whose discourses were incoherences and inconsistencies strung together—whose language was more often bathos than pathos—and whose mysticism was most akin to madness. Such truth and sincerity now could only be found in bedlam—and the puseyites, whom B. O'Brien abuses, have long ago been ashamed of the nonsense, and declare it is not consistent with reason or logic, or any modern mode of thought or expression, in fact, that it is not human, but supernatural, humbug.

Preacher of peace! Mr. Lane Fox knows better than B. O'Brien—and, guardian of the poor men, do pray allow Jesus to speak for himself—if you are ashamed of Jesus, and his words, he has told you he will be ashamed of you. Of course, therefore, all christian clergy are only doing their duty in supporting wars the most sanguinary and unjust. As to cant, we must say that Mr. B. O'Brien, in this notable exhibition of Jesus, does cant after the practise of primitive christianity, and that our clergy leaves such to Mawworms, the dissenters, the heterodox, evangelical, and all other hypocrites in and out of the pale of the church, who call themselves christians. As to Jesus preaching mercy and sacrifice, in comparison the latter to the former, was the drop to the ocean—his language was a continual execration, and he died to prepare lodgings in hell for the vast majarity of mankind. When all his ready and the number is made up, premises sufficiently spacious are taken to hold all—no doubt Mr. B. O'Brien will be summoned to take his place in the national convention. We leave this pattern of all that is just, and benevolent, and simple, and amiable, and affectionate in human nature, hoping that Mr. B. O'Brien has not taken after his model. Hoping that parsons and people won't take after the recommendation of Mr. B. O'Brien and adopt primitive christianity—it being our opinion that the farther from the source the better. We have advanced in civilisation by quitting the dark ages, and we should return to them in primitive christianity, or in a revival of anybody's true christianity. The practise of christianity would renew the horrors of superstition, the bloody bigotry, intolerance, and persecution of the past, which have been the only proofs of the truth of christianity ever given to the world. If a horrid monster came into the world, and had a beautiful progeny, we should say it deceived us, but if it produced a species all like to itself, we should say they were true to their origin. Such was the case with Jesus—he was a monster, he said he was a monster, and he would turn the world into

monsters. He fulfilled his words, those who received his faith, were made after his own image, and we have been but slowly indeed returning to forms more human, by a return to our senses. B. O'Brien, as has been done over and over again, by reformatons, and introductions of new true christianities, would have the power renovated of that hydra-headed beast Jesus Christ. He would have him propagate his species, when it is nearly extinct, and when it can only be done according to the old receipt for the spread of monsters, by spilling the blood of one of them over the earth, or cutting off one head to have a dozen arise in its place. A way of generating which christians have preserved, by eating and drinking the body and blood of Jesus.

We do not see the use of trying to wash blackamoors white, either Jesus or Robespierre, *the deist*, who is said to have put *atheists* to death. However little we *atheists* care about ourselves, and may, as a matter of history and literary curiosity, if we find cause for it, be reconciled to Robespierre—yet, for the sake of humanity, where we are certain of our opinion, and will contend against christianity with any one, we will not silently allow a Jesus Christ to be dressed up as an example to humbug the people, however much in other respects we may agree with the repealer's friend and poor man's guardian.

The papers of the same week gave a specimen of primitive, practical christianity, which we subjoin below. Touching the subject of agricultural distress—

"A writer in *The Morning Chronicle*, under the signature of "One who has Whistled at the Plough," makes the following observations, which we are induced to quote, because they show the feeling of antipathy which, we regret to state, the labourer begins to exhibit against the parson and the squire. The writer says—Before I reached Wilton, through a district purely agricultural, I passed three churches. I went on and saw, in addition to what was already in Wilton, a new one building, as I am told, at the expense of £35,000, from the funds of the Hon. Sydney Herbert and other members of the Pembroke family, together with assistance from some church-building society. I returned in the afternoon, and, as is my usual custom when travelling, went into the first church at which service was about to begin. This was at a place between Wilton and Salisbury. A very animated sermon was preached; much of it on necessity of contributing to some missionary fund. The minister went into a calculation to show what a sixpence a year would do from each person in the United Kingdom—namely, that it would, with other assistance, send as many missionaries to China, the East In-

dies, Cape of Good Hope, and other places mentioned, as would convert all the Chinese, Hindoos, and Caffres, and prepare them to enjoy those holy ordinances so richly possessed by the people who at that moment heard him. Now, previous to going in, I had talked with two or three men in smock-frocks, who told me that they worked for one of the most extensive farmers in the neighbourhood; that on the previous Saturday evening he had reduced their wages one shilling a week, giving those who had nine shillings (the highest) eight, and those who had eight giving them seven. I saw them again, with some others, when service was over; and the others told me that all over the estate of Lord Pembroke, reductions had either been made or notified. I inquired if the clergyman who had preached was the one who usually ministered there? The answer of one of the men, who subsequently told me he had himself been thirty years in the parish, and had attended church constantly all that time—his answer was, 'Yes, blast him! he be our own parson, sure enough—he be always a begging; he be always, sin' ever I know him.' 'And sin' I knowed him,' said another; 'and that was afore he comed here. But for that part of it, I never knowed a parson as wasn't a begging for summat or tother.' 'Ah!' says a woman, who came forward with some others, also just out of the church: 'And look at wages a comin' down; look at them rich wagherbonds as the parsons hunt, and dine, and drink with! So help me god, we bes more fitter to be taken into the union and starved, than pay for parsons as go abroad.' 'Why don't they,' said another, 'send them parsons as be chanting every day in Sailsbury Cathedral to nobody but the bare stones, and be so rich as to have so much land all over, why don't they go?' 'They don't go,' said the old man who first spoke, 'because they be rich; they wants the money to send away the poor uns; I knows what they want; I been knowing them too long not to know that.' (Dispatch.)

Now, the sermon of the clergyman, and the practise he recommended, was genuine christianity, the most primitive of all, taken living from the new Jew-book. Did not Jesus tell those who would follow him to give up all? Does he not approve of the poor widow who gave her all to a temple? Rich and poor were to surrender all their means of living, and to have no thought for the morrow. Jesus never taught that charity began at home—he cursed all the places of his nativity, got some deluded followers, deserters from their families—men, women, and children, of the neighbourhood where he was known, travelled far and wide himself—and sent missionaries everywhere to pick up the scattered elect. The apostles left their own na-

tion to convert the Roman empire, then the known world. The priesthood have only imitated their great example, and his immediate successors and the conduct of the church ever since has only been true to its origin in exhorting people to give up all that they have, and to be quite content in knowing that the money is spent in making more dupes. To question what the clergy do with the money, is as great blasphemy as the murmur of the disciples, who thought that the money Jesus spent in amusing himself with the extravagances of a whore had better been laid out on the poor.

We may pity a country population, who exclaim against orthodox christianity, judging it by its results, but we must feel indignation against those who would supplant it by another christianity of their own, which they represent as the only true one, and would force upon the consciences of others. A Mr. Self, who answers well to this name, and declares himself a dissenter, thus addresses a meeting of the assembled parishoners and churchmen of Shoreditch, to petition for the removal of their puseyite parsons:

"He did not hesitate to proclaim himself a dissenter, but he had, notwithstanding, some reverence for the church established by law. So long as it retained its *original simplicity*—so long as its ministers adhered to the principles confirmed by the restoration, he admired, and would uphold the church against the contaminating doctrines of puseyism, which was but another name for popery. Those who worshipped god in sincerity required not the stimulants of images—they wanted not the exhibition of golden candlesticks or alms-basins, or any of the other mummeries of popery, which were altogether inconsistent with the unaffected forms of the reformed church (vociferous applause). He would have the heads of the church beware how they sanctioned the dissemination of puseyite tenets—they were not acceptable to true protestants. If the clergy tolerated them the people would not."

This speech was an edition in advance of the Bronterre O'Brien article. Any one who happens to glance at the controversy about this stuff, will be able to see that these puseyite clergymen are only practising observances, according to the rubric, and the thirty-nine articles, which, however fallen into desuetude, they take an oath to observe. In the books published on either side, and the bishops, allow them this plea in defence of their renovations. They say themselves, that their observances and doctrines are in conformity with the scriptures, the apostolic ages, real primitive, practical, christianity in all its original simplicity. The nonsense and absurdity of their words and works, are the fruits by which we atheists know them. We have no doubt that they come off that

tree of ignorance, folly, and superstition—Jesus Christ. But what inconsistency in a dissenter wishing the clergy to prejure themselves, and in B. O'Brien wanting them to be what they are, and representing the bible, and Jesus, and christianity such as they are not, and telling the clergy to take up their cross and follow him. Why not honestly avow what they want, who they are, and support principles common to all, instead of speaking like false prophets, teachers, and Christs? lo I am here! lo I am there! Is it not plain that the evils they complain of are in a state church and religion itself, and that it would be acting up to their principles to demand the abolition of the first, and remove its cause for ever, by making the public aware of the folly of the second. Now such reformers are acting under false pretences, as if each of them were trying to occupy the places, when vacancies occurred, of church and religion.

W. J. B.

GEOLOGICAL "REVELATIONS."

BY A BELIEVER.

GEOLOGY, although one of the most pregnant sciences, and largely bearing on the moral and religious belief of mankind, will certainly never prosper in this country, as long as, first, the science itself, and even scientific specimens, will be a matter of traffic and trade amongst the *savants*, and the higher classes in general—and, second, as long as geologists will so much depend on right reverends, right honourables, &c., in line, on those who are interested in keeping up the usual common-place of society. It is necessary (for corroborating our first assertion) to bring the following passage to the knowledge of our readers: "I *still* think, the trustees of the British Museum were not fairly treated (!) in the purchase of Mr. Hawkin's fossils, and if Dr. Buckland seems it advisable to prosecute me for thinking so, he can make a cat's paw of his friend, and guarantee him his expences to carry on the action."* On perusing such passages, the candid reader may well say with the Swedish statesman: "Oh! with how little wisdom (honesty?) is this world governed!" Although we consider our time too valuable to wade through a heap of buse and scandal, exchanged between Messrs. Charlesworth, Buckland, Owen, and Lyell, we have found in the very pamphlet just cited an assertion corroborating our second assertion, namely, the little attention which has been hitherto paid to the fossil remains of a monkey, found in a, comparatively, so ancient formation as the

London clay: "Mr. Lyell immediately requested Messrs. Wood and Colchester to renew their search in the same sand at Kyson, and they soon after found there a jaw and tooth, which Mr. Owen refers to a quadrumanous animal of the genus *macacus*. The sand containing these remains is referable to the London clay, and is the first instance of the fossil remains of quadrumana (*bimana*?) having been found in a deposit of the eocene period," p. 47. Every one, interested in geological science will know, that it has been the chief argument of those who contend for the (especially!) *divine* origin of man, that there are no fossil remains of the monkey tribe to be found in our beds of rocks; and those, who have hitherto (vainly) contended for the—universal—pan-theistic origin of our species, will be glad to hear, that such *ere* to be met with, the fact being corroborated by Mr. Lyell, the friend of the Reverend J. P. Buckland, D.D., and regius professor at Oxford.

Shortly after the discovery of bimanous remains in this country, jaws and other remains of monkeys have been found in France. Mr. Lund, the Danish traveller, found, in the year 1838, an ourang-outang of six feet high, in the rocks of the Brazils,* an object so interesting, that we shall revert to it on another occasion. The greatest discovery is, however, yet to be mentioned. Captain P. T. Cantley, who has made extensive researches in Indian geology, and published various papers in the *Asiatic Researches*, has lately discovered in the Hymalya mountains the fossil remains of an ourang-outang ten feet high.† The specimens have arrived in London, and it is to be hoped that the parties who are in possession of these invaluable relics, will not keep them out of the view of the public.

Grave considerations attach themselves to the above sublime and interesting discoveries of these "latter days." We find an uninterrupted link from the simiac tribe to man—because any one who has seen, or read of the New Hollanders, will know that they exhibit such a low degree of humanity, or human nature, that taking away from them one single item of intelligence, or even acquirement, nothing but the mere ourang-outang would be left behind.

It cannot be doubted, that much relating to the geology of the globe and the history of man is on the eve of being brought to light. We come to know, that Mr. Kock, the discoverer of the large *Mastodon Missouriensis*, lately exhibited in the Egyptian Hall, has found other osseous fragments of

* Vide "Lund's View of the Fauna of Brazil, previous to the last geological revolution"—in the Magazine of Natural History.

† "There were giants (!) in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of god (?) came into the daughters of men."

* Appendix to the 39th number of the new series of the Magazine of Natural History, p. 43.

the same animal, in which spears of some long vanished-away race of men were found sticking. Man, has, therefore, existed coetaneous with some of the extinct races of gigantic animals. He has, however, left no record, either scriptural or monumental, of the period behind him. He could not, being then yet merging into mere animality. Still traditional accounts, even of that period, g'are through the horison, of times of which we shall speak on a future occasion.

MR. FLEMING'S
ANTI-THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION
RESOLUTION,

In the Eighth Rationalist Congress.

RESOLUTION.—“ That it be an instruction to all the missionaries and lecturers of the rational society that they confine themselves strictly to the elucidation of the science of human nature, the influence of circumstances upon human nature, and the science of society. The congress have seen with much regret, that individuals officiating as social missionaries have been induced to engage in useless and irritating theological discussions, and trust that all the agents employed by the society will, in future, be strictly confined to the promotion of the objects of the society alone, as laid down in the preamble to the laws.”

It appears that no one opposed the resolution of Mr. Fleming, except Mr. Jones, the congress being all but unanimous in their approval of this attempt to crush mental improvement, except through the contracted medium of the “preamble” of the rational society.

Although the congress were all but unanimous on this point, I hope and expect to find a different feeling in the branches of the society generally; if it is not so, it will become the duty of the minority to form societies based on the principles of UNIVERSAL INQUIRY AND REFORM. The signs of the times demand such a step more than they have ever done before in the history of mankind. I object to the resolution—

1st. Because it is an attempt to disguise the hostility of the rationalist to the religions of the christian world, and is, therefore, hypocritical.

2nd. Because sound policy demands that these religions should be opposed, and removed in the shortest possible period, root and branch.

3rd. Because the resolution is an infraction of the principles of the society, as laid down in the Outline of the rational system, more especially as laid down in the chapter on “liberty of conscience,” the Outline having answered the purposes of the society, hitherto, when “strictly” observed.

4th. Because it must of necessity retard the progress of society, inasmuch as the means of the rationalist are not sufficient to accomplish the object he has in view, nor likely to be so for some centuries to come.

5th. Because it makes the rational society more *irrational* than any other society, by crushing the individual energies of its members, and deprives them of the liberty the members of other societies use and enjoy.

6th. Because the history of the rational society itself proves that compromising with the old world, in any way whatever, is detrimental to its best interests, and that *fearless, detailed* opposition to everything that is wrong, is its best friend.

7th. Because it is neither possible, desirable, nor necessary, to collect audiences year after year, to hear dissertations on man a compound being, the creature of circumstances—co-operative production—equal distribution, &c.

8th. Because the resolution must, of necessity, prevent many friends of rationalism from co-operating with the society to accomplish its objects, for a rule binding upon one is binding upon all.

9th. Because it cannot be shown that the policy recommended is the most efficient that could be adopted for the practical introduction of the rational system, nor for making the best use of halls of science.

I could enter at great length into this subject did time and space permit. Should the reasons I have assigned be called in question, you may hear from me again—if they are not objected to, I shall leave the subject with some of your former writers on the subject of “Policy versus Principle.”

A COVENTRY SOCIALIST LECTURER.

P. S. In a report of progress from Coventry, that appears in the *New Moral World*, June 10th, I find the following: “Had the lecturers of our branch been as persevering as they have been numerous and talented, this city would have been first and foremost in the socialist agitation long ere this, but socialism has been considered by them too much as a secondary object, instead of being considered as one that should be the leading feature in all they say and do for the public good.” This, at first sight, seems to justify Mr. Fleming’s resolution, I therefore wish to say, that the writer of this and that article does *not* wish socialism to be considered a “secondary object,” but he *does* wish that it should *not* be the *sole* object of the socialists’ exertions. Besides, theological discussion has not retarded the Coventry branch, other and minor things being preferred to socialism, by many of the members, has done this, and not theological discussion. There is but one theological lecturer connected with the branch, Mr. B. S. R., and

he does not shock the people any more than he can help, although he does not withhold the truth for the sake of public feeling—occasionally others do the same, but not often.

Although the Coventry branch has not done much for socialism, it has done much to liberalise public feeling, as evidenced by the fact that three of its lecturers lately carried a resolution condemning religious instruction being given in the national schools—and this, too, in spite of the leading dissenting ministers and dissenters of the city. This was done at one of the largest meetings ever held in the city hall. Truly did G. J. H. say in the *Oracle*, "More is done than is recorded, and liberal views extend further than is supposed."

HOW TO CONVERT INFIDELS.

To the Editor of the Oracle of Reason.

MR. EDITOR.—I thought had I neglected sending the following manifestation of christian profundity, that I should not be doing my duty. Though you may have many instances nearly akin to it, yet I think, were you to give it insertion, that it would both gratify and instruct the numerous and intelligent readers of your little *Oracle*, as affording a sublime specimen of the mode adopted in this part of the country to upset infidelity and palm religion upon a credulous public in the nineteenth century.

It is a true saying, that "drowning men catch at straws," and I think that here it is fully exemplified.

The Rev. D. T., a celebrated primitive methodist revivalist, was recently preaching at a small village, not 20 miles from Keighley. His sermon consisted principally of an exposition of the wonderful prophecies and miracles of the good men of old. In order to show the efficacy of prayer in modern, as well as ancient, times, he favoured his audience with one instance. A certain wesleyan methodist parson happened to be preaching at a village notorious for infidelity. Whether the preacher was closely "pinned" on some disputable point of religion or not, D. T. did not say; but be that as it may, it appears that a move must be had some how. In order to effect this, he took occasion to show his intimate communion with the most high, by broadly stating that before twenty-four hours had elapsed, "there would be rain." This would doubtless surprise the infidel crew. Well, time passed on, and brought the next day, but nothing appeared symptomatic of the shower. The atmosphere was clear and calm; the sky blue and beautiful. This sorely grieved the rev. gentleman, and folding up his arms, he walked into his chamber, and paced backwards and

forwards in the utmost uneasiness. "Oh," said he, "what will these infidels say if there be no rain?" At length he knelt down, and prayed fervently to god (I suppose in faith, believing) to open the windows of heaven, and let the rain descend in copious showers, so that the infidel might be disappointed. His prayer was answered; the rain came, and thus was he enabled to come off more than conqueror, to the great discomfiture of the infidels. There now! Talk of your barometers; talk of your uniformity in nature's operations; talk of like causes producing like effects; why, it's rank nonsense—the priest holds in his hands the balance of power; all nature is subservient to his will, and he has only to make his requests known, and the creator of all things bows obedience to his wishes.

But seriously, Mr. Editor, admitting this account of the wesleyan prophet's good luck to be true, D. T. could not surely think of making any rational or unprejudiced person believe that he could have had secret communion with the lord, so as to exact a promise from him that rain should come at a certain time, and yet, after that, as the time drew near, be labouring under such mental dejection for fear of his breaking his word. He could not have thought that a god who "cannot lie" would have deceived him in so trifling a thing. No, but he evidently made the prediction merely to excite the "organ of wonder," and happening pretty nearly to hit the mark, it is held up as a proof of the efficacy of the prayers of a righteous man. Ah, sir, were the priests to place the instances in which the prayers of many a sincere christian have been unanswered, in juxtaposition with those in which they have, we should have a glaring contrast, much to their disadvantage. And yet it is a lamentable fact, that doctrine like this obtains general currency, and its propounders set up as public instructors—as lights of the world. We need not wonder that mankind have made so little progress in a knowledge of their own constitution and that of the external world, and the relations between them, when such is the case.

As soon as they shall learn that nature is one harmonic whole, governed by fixed immutable laws, a transgression of which, whether by the christian or infidel, is invariably followed by pain, and the obedience by pleasure—and when they shall discover that she has inexhaustible resources in store for them, to develop and apply which, for the promotion of permanent happiness, is the highest object of their existence, then, and not till then, may we safely say, that kingly tyranny and priestly fraud will come to an end.

S. H.

Ryecroft, near Keighley, Yorkshire.

THE SPIRIT OF FANATICISM,

Or Conversions of methodism, by the author of the "Maid of Midian."

WHAT wild exclamations salute the dull ear,
With screams bursting forth on the stillness of night!
'Tis noise of the holy devotion we hear,
Of fanatics frantic with grief and delight.
The ranting and caating,
And shouting and spouting,
Bewilder weak minds with alarm and affright.

Like furies now raving, o'ercharged with blind zeal,
Excitement soon drives their best senses away;
When nerves are unstrung, from emotions they feel,
The priest, like the potter, can manage his clay,
With coaxing and hoaxing,
Beseeching and preaching,
That all will be lost who may longer delay.

The victims of terror now shudder and quail,
As horrible spectres the preacher pours trays;
With mouths and ears open for each frightful tale,
Unthinking they scream, and bewilder'd they gaze.
What wonders and thunders,
And lightning and fright'ning,
Proceed from the storms that enthusiasts raise!

With nonsense proclaimed till it seems quite profound,
Deception then mostly on tumult relies;
When fear and amazement are kindled around,
Then reason no longer her balance supplies.
But singing and sighing,
And laughing and crying,
Are followed by groaning and rubbing the eyes.

Some fancy they're hearing hell's fiery floods roar—
In mandates like thunder they're told to repent;
O'ercome with dread terror they sink to the floor,
When shouts o'er the prostrate to heaven are sent.
Then thumping and jumping,
And shaking and quaking,
As if this fair earth to its centre were rent.

The tumult now thickens—the saints now perspire,
With voices like volcanoes, people are told
What wonders are wrought by the heaven-sent fire—
Its power on those present, they now may behold.
With them, a delusion
Is holy infusion.
Refining the heart; no alloy with the gold.

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No. VI.,

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By Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer, Author of "Pelham," &c.

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"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE."

First Editor—Charles Southwell, imprisoned for twelve months and fined £100, for Blasphemy in No. 4.
Second Editor—George Jacob Holyoake, imprisoned for six months, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.
Third Editor—Thomas Paterson, imprisoned for one month, for Blasphemous Placards, in London.
Vendors—George Adams, imprisoned for one month for selling No. 25, in Cheltenham; and
Harriet Adams, his wife, arrested for selling No. 4, in the same town.

No. 86.]

EDITED BY WILLIAM CHILTON.

[PRICE 1D.]

THE SCOTCH GOD

versus

ROBINSON AND FINLAY.

THESE notoriously disgraceful cases, which were expected to come on for hearing on Monday, July 24th, at the high court of judicature, Edinburgh, *have been abandoned*, at least for the time being. "The Man Paterson," who was sent for express, to take charge of Mr. Robinson's shop, during his expected incarceration, writes me: "Robinson and Finlay's cases are, for the time being, abandoned. The counts of the indictments, founded on the medical books seized in Mr. R.'s private house—abandoned. Robinson was bailed out last night at 10 o'clock—very expensive work here"—where is it not? Wherever Mammon is king, law will be dear, and justice only to be bought. Some remarks of my friend will appropriately introduce a question upon which I would wish to say a few words—and I would have done this sooner, and much sooner have noticed the actions of our friends over the border, but that I have been most barren of information. Not until Paterson wrote the above from the seat of war, had anything been sent to the *Oracle*, excepting what has appeared in its pages. At this I was not surprised, for the activity of the editor of the *Investigator* left little or nothing to be wished for on the part of our Scotch friends—and leaves me little or nothing to do, now that the affair has taken so favourable a turn.

But to resume, Paterson says: "Robinson here bears the best of characters—men of all shades of opinion defend him. Jeffrey, and Campbell, nobly stepped in—so did Southwell. Universal sympathy in his and Finlay's behalf." I am glad to hear it, and trust it will ever be so where persecution rears its bloody front—but I hope, also, that its *intended* victims will not only be sympathised with, *but protected*. Sympathy is very well, where *relief* is out of the question—but no one would ever hesitate to declare in favour of assistance, if they had their choice of the two. I have heard of an

alderman of London, who attended a meeting for charitable purposes, and who, after several speeches of condolence had been spoken, simply rose and said, "Mr. Chairman, I am a thousand pounds sorry"—and handed him the money. Whatever might have been the eloquence of previous speakers, this was, most certainly, "the speech" of the occasion, for men began immediately to count out their *gold*, and not their *words*. So I hope it will be in Scotland—that sympathy will be expressed by pounds, shillings, and pence, and not by words *merely*. Friend Southwell has commented upon certain works of an *indecent* and grossly immoral nature, which were found upon the back shelves of Mr. Robinson's shop, and says: "Infidels are the most determined foes of such productions, especially atheistical infidels, for these, of all the antagonists of christianity, are most decided in their opposition to every species of immorality—and I am bound to declare, that atheists never will tolerate the mixing up, or confounding, of obscenity with the sublime philosophy of which they are the recipients. Those publishers who degrade philosophy by allying it with obscenity, can expect neither sympathy nor assistance from atheists." With our friend's motives I cannot disagree, but I think that there are many other works, issuing periodically from the press, and *standard* works also, which are eminently "calculated to damage public morals," that should be objected to, as well as the one named. Fanny Hill and Harriet Wilson I have never seen—the *Exquisite* I have seen and read, but nothing in its pages can equal or compare with that filthiest of all filthy books—the Jew-book. Yet who would object to an infidel publisher selling the BIBLE? Infidels generally, but more especially atheistical infidels, are loud in their declamations against the immorality of the bible—but no one suspects the virtue or honesty of the infidel publisher who sells it, merely because he does sell it. Infidel publishers must live, and if they cannot live by their friends, they must live upon their enemies. I do not see where, *in justice to them*, the line can be drawn. The Jew-

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book, *against* Fanny Hill, Harriet Wilson, the Exquisite, the Age, Satirist, and John Bull—the works of Lloyd, and others of a similar nature, *against* the tracts of the various religious societies—they are all “calculated to damage public morals”—where shall we draw the line? Wherever we draw it, the man’s general character must still be the standard—and Robinson’s appears to be unimpeachable. Infidel publishers must either sell infidelity *alone*, to save their characters, or shut up shop—for if they sell ever so little of fidelity, or orthodoxy, they must endanger their moral standing.

Since writing the foregoing, I have learnt that Mr. Holyoake, at the City Road Institution, on Sunday last, defended the right of publishers to publish *anything*—obscenity, immorality, or nonsense. I am glad to find the subject taken up in the metropolis.

I am happy to inform those who are not already aware of it, that our Scotch friends have, upon the first encounter, taken the bull of oppression fairly by the horns, and provided both for the present attack, and any subsequent onslaught “the priests of the bloody faith” may goad him to. A “SCOTTISH ANTI-PERSECUTION UNION” has been formed, “Whose object shall be to afford pecuniary, and every other possible, aid, to any party or parties who may be prosecuted, or persecuted, for the expression or publication of opinion.”

W. C.

THE SCOTTISH BLASPHEMY CASES.

THE trials of Messrs. Finlay and Robinson came on, on Monday, July 24th. It appears from the *Edinburgh Weekly Register* that six of the twelve counts against Mr. Robinson were abandoned, and the six the worst of the twelve. Mr. Alex. McNeill appeared for the defendant, and took his objections with great ability and cleverness.

Some conversation took place on the bench, as to the precise effect of the deliverance their lordships had given, the interlocutor was drawn out holding the first, second, fourth, seventh, tenth, and twelfth charges in the indictment irrelevant, as laid—and, on the motion of the lord advocate, the diet was deserted against the prisoner *pro loco et tempore*, and Mr. Robinson was held to bail on a new warrant.

The indictment against Mr. Finlay was not called, as falling under the same objections as Mr. Robinson’s.

The trial, on the counts held to be good, is expected to take place in four months.

Let the friends of freedom remember that this success, though great and cheering, has involved Messrs. Finlay and Robinson in

heavy expences—which will also have to be incurred again. Therefore, every man should regard this respite as time afforded to render that assistance which these victims of persecution have a right to expect, and which they *must* receive.

The London Anti Persecution Union is rousing its-self, and addresses and appeals on behalf of our Scottish friends will shortly be made.

G. J. H.

REPEAL OF THE UNION.

A dialogue stating both sides of the question, IN REPLY TO W. J. B.

BY A COVENTRY SOCIALIST LECTURER.

W.J.B.—I do not understand your meaning when you say that you admit that Britons have been tyrants to Irishmen, and that you would put an end to that tyranny, and yet would not repeal the union.

C. S. L.—I admit the fact of British tyranny, but I deny that a separation of the two countries (for repeal would be separation, at no distant period) would mend the matter—for the catholic priesthood in Ireland are *now* kept in check by their rivals the priests of the church of England, *then* they could do as they pleased with those who differed from their church.

W. J. B.—Do you mean to say, that scenes of carnage and plunder would, in future, disgrace the history of Ireland, if separated from this country, or do you mean that an unsuccessful attempt to obtain repeal would only end in an increase of that tyranny now so much and so justly abhorred?

C. S. L.—I mean both. In the first case, that is, in case of legislative independence, the only difference would be this—*now* protestants are the aggressors, and catholics the sufferers—*then* catholics would be the aggressors, and protestants the sufferers. You may answer, that it is better that the many tyrannise over the few, than the few over the many—but I shall affirm and prove, in reply, that the principles of protestantism are more favourable to human progression than the principles of catholicism, and that, consequently, the tyranny of the many would last longer than the tyranny of the few.

W. J. B.—But you have not yet told me what tyranny you mean.

C. S. L.—Not told you! nor was it necessary—as it was understood between us, that the tyranny complained of, was the tyranny of *unequal laws* at present existing.

W. J. B.—But your reasons in No. 80 of the *Oracle* appear to me very much like a no-popery placard.

C. S. L.—Never mind what they appear like, are they true? are we to reject truths because they have been made a dis-

honest use of, to serve the purpose of party spirit? I should think not, and yet this is all that your objection amounts to:

W. J. B.—Then you mean, that a change of masters, not a change of condition, would be the result of repeal, because power would simply change hands, catholics being the tyrants, and protestants the slaves.

C. S. L.—Exactly so—that is my conviction.

W. J. B.—But protestant countries have laws against blasphemy, whilst many catholic ones have not. How is this—if catholicism is by far the most intolerant religion of the two?

C. S. L.—Because, in catholic countries, infidels are few, whilst in protestant countries they are many—hence they are feared in the one case, but not in the other. Catholicism crushes *all* inquiry, on principle, it does not allow the people the use of the bible, except as explained infallibly by the church—but protestantism places the bible in the hands of the people, and thus enables them to judge for themselves—and, by that means, gives birth to, and encourages the growth of, infidelity. I do not think it necessary to prove to any one acquainted with history, that wholesale intolerance has characterised the story of the catholic church, and that tolerance is the natural offspring of catholicism—even protestant intolerance itself springs from the same polluted source. Catholicism does not attempt to cultivate the human mind—protestantism does, to a certain extent—and therefore it is that I conclude that the world has more to hope, and less to fear, from the latter than the former.

W. J. B.—But what will you say to France and Sweden? In catholic France there is law against blasphemy, whilst, in Sweden, protestant country, the laws are very severe.

C. S. L.—I deny that France is a catholic country, it is an infidel country, at least, it is more infidel than any other country that I know of. Public opinion has there put down prosecutions for blasphemy, at any rate, you seem to think so—but you have not shown, nor can you show, that this is in any measure attributable to catholicism. The case of Sweden is simply this—there they have not the same means of mental improvement as in France. If it could be proved no other way, I would still conclude that exceptions could not prove a general rule.

W. J. B.—In future, I would recommend you to study perspicuity of style, for I do not understand one part of your article in No. 80 of the *Oracle*, nor am I certain that you understand you in another part of it.

C. S. L.—Working about 80 hours per week, I have not much time to study style,

however valuable it may be—but allow me to say, that no one could write a more ambiguous paragraph than the one that concludes your reply in No. 81 of the *Oracle*. I shall leave the assassinating part of the argument until I know what you can advance in reply to that already advanced on my side of the question, assuring you that I cannot allow that the *means* justifies the end—nor is it my intention to continue the subject of repeal, as both sides have been heard—nor do I see that it is at all likely that the repeal question has the slightest chance of success among the people of England—nor should I have taken up the question at all, had it not been from a desire to clear atheism from the charge of being “a bloody and brutal system,” for such it was affirmed to be by the Rev. Robert Hall—and, certainly, if the *Oracle* of atheism propounded the assassinating views you hold, without contradiction, it would afford some ground for the charge.

FREE DISCUSSION EXTRAORDINARY.

Specially Reported for the Oracle of Reason,

BY HENRY SCULTHORP.

IT having been buzzed about, a few evenings since, that a public meeting was about to be holden at a large hall, in a certain manufacturing town, for the purpose of discussing the merits of priestcraft, considerable sensation prevailed throughout the vicinity of the place, and several gentlemen of “the cloth,” who had got scent of the affair, were present—evidently anxious to have an ear in the proceedings. The company being seated, a gentleman on the rostrum proposed the question, “What is priestcraft?” All eyes were rivetted upon the orator—some wondering whether he was going to give the solution of the question *himself*, or await an answer thereto from some part of the audience. The canonical gentry (three in number) evinced considerable emotion—now looking at each other, and then at the platform, as though their “fingers itched” to mount the rostrum *themselves*. At length, one of the clerical triad, more fearless than his brethren in trade, broke silence—and, stepping forward as the representative of the other two, observed, that on the respectful assurance of the meeting that the door was locked, and that none of the *mitred* heads were present, and within hearing, he would speak his true sentiments on the subject at issue—and, relying upon the honour of the meeting, not to betray him and his colleagues present into the hands of his superiors—the dignitaries of the church—the rev. gentleman

THE ORACLE OF REASON.

(who gave his name to be UNDERSTRAPPER) very politely begged the privilege of ascending the platform, whither, in accordance with his request, he was courteously conducted. Having taken his standing on the elevated arena, he addressed the meeting as follows :

"Gentlemen, prompted by a spirit of inquiry and a love of truth, I was induced, from information I received from some friends, relative to the convening of a meeting here, this evening, to attend (with two friends) on this occasion—the subject announced for discussion being one upon which I may be allowed, from my position in society, to possess *some* little knowledge—and knowing that I have nothing to fear from my brothers in office—who have now the honour to form a part of this assembly—they being as liberal as any persons present can possibly be (hear, hear)—I shall, without reserve, proceed to answer the question, 'What is priestcraft?'

'Tis that base fabric which, uprear'd
By despots vile, has long appear'd,
To *blinded* zeal, for sins a purge;
To *honesty*, for truth a scourge.
Corruption's den, whose gloomy shades
Each blind, each heedless man pervades,
Who, thus entrapp'd, around it throws
The seed, where, some time after, grows
The tree whose fruit—whose wide-spread
leaves
Are bauble show, that man deceives.

(Hear, hear, and cheering, in which the two clerical auditors heartily joined.) Gentlemen (resumed the plebeian divine), I can only return my warmest thanks for the hearing you have favoured me with; and, presuming that my two friends will not object to follow my suit (hear), I shall now sit down, and await the issue of their observations upon the subject." (Cheering.)

The two friends of the last speaker, emboldened by the conduct of their predecessor, made advances towards the rostrum, where their arrival was announced by applause.

One of them, who gave his name VASSAL, said he cordially responded to the sentiments uttered by the Rev. Mr. Understrapper—that he concurred with that gent.'s notions in the matter now before them, in every iota, and held them to be irrefutable. He was feelingly alive to the arrogance of the wealthy priesthood, by whom he had been held in *vassalage* for many years, without the least signs of promotion. The reason was apparent—he had ever evinced a close adherence to honesty, and a hatred to sycophancy—it was those only, he contended, who entertained a predilection for the latter, to the entire exclusion of the former, to whom church promotion was at any time open. He de-

scribed the heads of the church to be a set of sordid individuals, who, though they affected humility, were, nevertheless, the most impetuous beings in the country. One of the head primates possessed such an over-bearing disposition, that he really believed that if his reverence had his own way, he would fain make his poor curates lick the dust before his footstool. His caprice was always best pleased with the most servile hypocrisy in any who sought his aid or patronage. He (the Rev. Mr. Vassal) would relate a case in point. The curate of a parish, not far from his own, but who had not half the years' standing in the church, nor, consequently, half the ecclesiastical experience that he himself possessed, had been long endeavouring, by sycophancy and time-serving dissimulation, to obtain promotion—and he had, by ceaseless perseverance in those charming and winning principles, carried his purpose. His elevation to "a living" took place but a short time since, and he was now preaching at forty-parson power for a mitre (Hear, and laughter.) This rev., like the former, sat down amidst overwhelming laudations; when, to the surprise of all present his place was supplied by the third divine.

The Rev. Mr. FILTOPS—no relation, he assured them, to the bishop of Exeter—confirmed the statement of the last speaker. (At this moment a voice from the body of the hall inquired how the grievances expatiated upon by the preceeding orators were to be remedied—how the darkness dispelled?) Mr. Filtops replied: Gentlemen, I am proud that you have been so complimentary towards me, as to appeal to my judgment in this important affair, and as you have done so, shall feel myself bound to answer the question consistently with the dictates of my conscience, and the advice I shall give you shall be in accordance therewith. To effect, the my friends, the object involved in the question just proposed, you must :

With vice and cant a valiant contest wage
And with the brazen monsters of the age
Down with the domes where mitred scoundrels meet,
And lash the barking dogs from street
street:
Till ev'ry bishop from the bench be hur
Scorn'd by the just, and carted round
world!

Mr. Filtops, like the former addresser was, on resuming his seat, hailed with shout and other marks of satisfaction.

A fourth divine now arose (who had before, been observed) from amidst the congregation; and, congratulating the clerical trio upon their liberal ideas, and honesty and courage in advancing them, marked, "In my opinion, priestcraft

complete juggle. It is a fact now becoming too well known to be controverted, that:

Sceptred tyrants, peers, and priests malign,
Assume a claim to rob, by right divine!

And further remarked, that if the advice previously given by the Rev. Mr. Filtops, could be carried into practice, the humbug would, in all likelihood, shortly cease to exist.—The meeting then broke up.

The report of the above extraordinary proceedings was written at the "Albion Coffee Rooms," Bow-street, opposite the celebrated mansion where "the Man Paterson," on more than one occasion, met, by legal invitation, his christian friends, whose "loving kindness," and "tender mercies over all prisoners and captives," he is bound, in *gratitude*, ever to remember.

SHOCKING THE SHOCKERS.

RECENT ARTICLES.

The Oracle is certainly an organ of free expression—but what an illiberal organ it would be if every communication was cut down or raised up to your standard. The Oracle would then be but the organ of the editor. And this is what every pretended organ of free expression in this country is. The editors of such papers re-cast everything they suffer to appear, in order to give the paper a oneness, and preserve a unity. Such conduct may serve a party—but it can never serve free inquiry. Editorial despotism makes freedom of expression a farce. In the republic of letters every man should be heard, in his own way, and by his own words. It has been the glory of the Oracle to be no barren supporter of this privilege. Many rugged sentences have appeared on its pages—but they were better rugged than false.—G. J. H., in No. 81.

REPUDIATION being the order of the day, I would fain have a say of my own upon the shocking articles which have lately shattered the nerves of those who, for some few years past, have been frightening the world from its propriety. If our draughts have produced such an effect upon those long-used to strong drinks—what must be the result upon the weak-stomached and timid?

The surest proof of strength and honesty, is that the members of a party can afford to differ—and I cannot agree with the editor of the *Investigator*, that men always play into their enemies' hands when they disagree among themselves. Good health is generally free from pain—mortification always. Silence does not always give consent, nor difference of opinion prove dissension. "We (of the *Oracle*) care more for honesty than unity," as well expressed by Holyoake.

But to the subject of my present article. "Many objections have been made (as stated by G. J. H., in No. 81) to a notice of the 'Royal Birth,'" and I cannot dissent to our friend's remarks upon that subject. The notice was submitted to me by the writer,

before it appeared in print—I approved the *object*, any other language, equally effective, would have pleased me, but time was pressing, and it went to press.

Of the notice of the demise of the Duke of Sussex, nothing has appeared in the *Oracle*, though similar objections have been taken elsewhere. The Duke of Sussex, though the best of a bad lot, had vices which would not have contributed much to his respectability as a private citizen—but for a royal duke they were as nothing.

Come we next to the most objectionable of all objectionable passages—the recommendation to assassinate all the parsons of Ireland, as a means of speedily settling the civil war which appears inevitable in that country. Candour compels me to state, that this shock for the shockers has my unqualified approval. It has so long been my opinion that such a course would be the best for any people oppressed as the Irish are, that I feel as though "My wish was father to his thought." Physical force is certainly the worst of all arguments—but when the question is, not whether physical force shall be used, but *how* it shall be used, then I think the policy which shall remove the cause of its use in the most speedy manner is the best—and with this view I approve of the recommendation in No. 78. The church is the bone of contention, and if no other alternative for settling the dispute is offered, but the sacrifice of hundreds or thousands of innocent lives, or the sacrifice of the lives of those who live by the church, and who appear determined to die by it—why the sooner they *do* die the better. Southwell has well said in his *Investigator*, No. 14, that you should never deign any other reply to persecutors, but their own arguments—"let gibbet answer gibbet"—so say I, and I think a shrewd guess might be made of who would first cry, "hold! enough!" And I perfectly agree with the same writer, when he says, "The only reasoning likely to convince *them* (persecutors and tyrants) is that very reasoning they would, if they dare, use for the conversion of their opponents. A reasoning made up of iron-boot, thumb-screw, rack, prison, fire, and fagot arguments. They tell us we must *believe* before we can *judge*—and I tell them that they must be made to *feel* before they can *understand*." The christian precept of turning the left cheek when struck upon the right, is as immoral in practice as it is absurd in theory, and the virtual advocacy of the doctrine by unqualified denouncers of physical force, shows a narrowness of mind which it is lamentable to find among radical reformers.

G. J. H. says, in No. 81, "I hold the life and happiness of my fellow-man, even of my enemy, if I have one, as dear as my own." Would he then hesitate to destroy the wretch

who would seek his death—because of difference of opinion—when no other alternative offered for preserving his life? If he would allow himself to be murdered, rather than murder, under such circumstances, I should consider he acted immorally. For, the fact of his willingness to hear all men and injure none, would be proof of his being a better member of society than he who would hear none but those who agreed with him, and who would persecute all who disagreed with him—for G. J. H. to tamely submit to such a butcher, would be to injure society, and to act immorally. G. J. H. says, that what he objects to, in the articles which he mentions, is that what the writers think does not appear. Am I to infer that what he thinks *does* appear, supposing such a case as the one I have put? He adds, “Nearly every man, in guessing intentions, makes it a rule to guess the worst”—I think he has given a latitude for conjecture, and I hope, in believing he would not act as his words would warrant that I have not followed the rule. G. J. H. says, “In pulling down error, I see no necessity for pulling down one another.” The best mode of changing institutions must always be a question of fact, and not one of abstract reasoning. All the present institutions of society are based upon the ruins of other institutions, and, in some instances, upon the bones of their supporters. Institutions founded in blood and reared by slaughter, *may* require blood to remove them. If bad institutions *can* be removed by reason, *so much the better*—but is it rational or humane to allow millions to be sacrificed on the side of reason, when the murder of a few hundreds, or thousands, from the ranks of reason’s foes would effect the object? In Mr. Holyoake’s “Short and Easy Method with the Saints,” just published, I find the following: “None but madmen *argue* with policemen’s truncheons, or propose syllogisms to refute gaols. Pompey the Great said, mockingly, to the Mamertines, ‘Will you never have done with citing laws and privileges to men who wear swords?’ It is time that infidels cease to imitate Mamertine folly. *It is time that infidels ceased to cite rights and reasons to men who answer with policemen’s staves.*” This is very good—but if it be madness to *argue* with policemen’s truncheons, how are we to oppose them? And if it be folly to propose syllogisms to refute gaols, how are they to be refuted? Is there a middle course between moral force and physical force—or are we to go like lambs to the slaughter, and open not our mouths? Does Mr. H.’s meaning appear upon the above? I hope it does, for I think no one can mistake what such language *ought* to mean.

Henry Jeffery, social missionary of Glasgow, is much grieved at the coolness with

which murder is recommended—but much more so at the *impolicy* of the proceeding, saying, that it “Will delight our enemies, who will rejoice to have oracles of infidelity thus confirming the calumnies of the pious.” What a kind, gentle soul must Henry Jeffery be—an “unresisting youth,” like G. J. H.—and as careful of his character as a lady’s waiting-maid—his pulse, doubtless, beats as evenly as a sun-regulated clock, and not the slightest emotion of anger is ever *permitted* to ruffle the holy calm of his mind—he walks and talks, and sits and eats, and thinks and sleeps, amidst the jarrings of this wicked world, with as little show of emotion as though he were dwelling in an uninhabited sphere, or was one of the three thousand and ten whom Bulwer describes as ruling the destinies of this world.

But surely what follows is enough to frighten any man, whose heart is not encased in “oak and threefold brass”—and who has a character to lose. H. J. says that henceforward the order of association in the minds of the godly will be, “Atheism and barbarity, scepticism and ruthless cruelty, reason and lack of common sense, free inquiry and murder, shudderings at Jewish atrocities and sanctionings of the slaughter of christians, [and that these] are here placed [by H. J.] in most harmonious combination, *as if intended to put a weapon in the hands of orthodox declaimers upon the tendency of infidelity.*”

I think the light thrown upon this passage by the brackets and italics, will render any further assistance on my part unnecessary in that quarter, and I will therefore proceed a step further. Henry Jeffery says, “Do the editor and conductors of the *Oracle* sanction the savage sentiments of their contributor? If not, let them at once disavow their approval, and inform the public that the articles were inserted because it is the plan of the paper to admit the expression of any opinion, however outrageous it may be.” What if the editor and conductors of the *Oracle* do not agree with their contributor? What does H. J. want more than the same liberty which was given his opponent, namely, to express *his* disapprobation of such “savage sentiments” in language equally strong? The editor of a paper open to free discussion should act like the chairman of a public meeting—hear all and favour none—and not offer his opinions for or against any proposition, *except as one of the public*. The chairman of a public meeting has to preserve order, keep the speakers to the question, and obtain for all who behave properly a hearing. The editor of a free paper should take care that his contributors are intelligible—that they do not wander from the questions they propose to discuss—that the language used

in his opinion, warrantable, and such as he thinks might be defended, or which he is himself willing to defend—and that the opinions of adverse parties be fairly placed before the public. A friend writes me on the subject of a free press: "You are, on the principle of consistency, bound to insert whatever A. B. may send, whether good or bad—whether the shafts of bitter scorn or the rivellings of idiocy. Your motto is, nothing but opinion to check expressed opinion. This is my principle for the state, that you cannot carry it out, without carrying at the *Oracle* from the world." If this view of a free paper be correct, then it is manifest the *Oracle* cannot be an absolutely free paper—but it can be free relatively—that is all we want. But to return, the editor of the *Oracle* would be no more justified in repudiating one set of opinions because they were not his own, than he would in declaring for another set because they were his own. He discharges his duties by giving publicity to all shades of opinions, and it then becomes the duty of the public to determine their respective utility. To hold the editor morally, as well as legally, responsible, is certainly not just. Is it not sufficient that the editor publishes opposite opinions, without calling upon him to state his own views upon every matter which might emanate from others?—and calling upon him, too, in a way that would seem to imply a threat of consequences, if his views were unfavourable to the views of the objectors. I hope the Glasgow people are not so much shocked as to discontinue to support the *Oracle*, but will allow others to entertain different opinions from themselves, without punishing them for it. Strange as it may seem, it is not so much the principle, namely, murder, to which H. J. has objects, as it is to the *mode* of doing the business. He thinks there may have been a time "When a recourse to arms was necessary for the recovery of freedom"—but it is not so now, "physical force, as a means of reform," is, now a-days, "highly impolitic and fatal"—fatal to some, doubtless, it must be. The self-satisfaction of the socialists upon this head is amazing, and as amusing as it is astonishing. But I know that their lips are frequently overflow with charity, and their hearts with gall. Their denunciations of physical force and their pandering to religion are on a par—it would be *impolitic* to countenance the one, or denounce the other. H. J. admires "The men who shed their blood upon the battle-field, in a patriotic cause," but "In no age would men of noble hearts, see any thing but contempt for the sneaking cowardly assassins of W. J. B.'s recommendation." What an ardent lover of freedom must H. J. be, when he can glory in the

murder of freedom's friends by freedom's foes, upon the battle-field—but is struck with horror at the thought of freedom's enemies being murdered wherever they could be met with, if they would not take themselves off—for no one would wish to injure them otherwise. It is my opinion, if W. J. B.'s recommendation were acted on, there would not be a dozen obnoxious parsons despatched, before the country would be quit of them. A singular coincidence of opinion with the above, which was written many days anterior to Saturday last, appears in a letter to Lord Eliot, by P. O'Higgins, and copied into the *Northern Star* of the date stated, from the *Dublin Freeman's Journal*. Mr. O'Higgins, speaking of a period in the history of Ireland, says, "That the maddened, goaded, plundered people, finding that the laws afforded them no redress, but, on the contrary, oppressed them more and more, and gave additional impunity to their persecutors, had it in contemplation, as a last resource, and as their only hope of preserving themselves from utter annihilation, to shoot half a dozen of bishops and as many tilled rack-rent landlords, which would MOST UNQUESTIONABLY HAVE PUT A TOTAL STOP TO ANY FURTHER EFFUSION OF BLOOD—AN END TO TITHE SLAUGHTERS—AND AN END TO THE WHOLESALE DEPOPULATION OF THE COUNTRY!" What a number of desirable objects would have been gained, and what an immense amount of misery and bloodshed would have been spared the people of Ireland—by simply assassinating a dozen of the higher classes. The opinion of Mr. O'Higgins, that such a course "would, most unquestionably" have effected the good of which he speaks, is quite as good as the opposite opinion of H. J., "That an attempted massacre of any of the established authorities, would be revisited tenfold upon the people themselves." But, says H. J., "The age is beyond pikes and guns, as instruments of human regeneration"—it is not, I believe, beyond pikes and guns, as instruments of human slavery! The cant of moral force is as disgusting as the cant of christianity—the sticklers for moral force alone, were never known to reject the privileges gained for them by physical force. Tyrants never did care, nor never will care for moral force alone—it is physical force, morally, that is, rationally, directed, that they fear, and to which they bow. What avails arguments to cannon-balls? You may as well go whistle to the winds, as expect tyrants to relax their gripe, if they have nothing to fear. As to the cowardice of assassination—this can never be a valid objection to murder. If taking life be murder—the place where, the time when, and the mode in which men are deprived of life, affects not the question—it is murder, whether on the

battle-field, in open day—on the scaffold, as a punishment for crime—or in the streets, or lanes, or houses of a sleeping city. If it be moral to take life on the battle-field, in defence of freedom, it is moral to do the same thing, for the same object, from behind a hedge or through a window.

I shall leave a "Coventry Socialist Lecturer" to be dealt with by W. J. B., having already too long obtruded upon my readers.

W. C.

To the Editor of the Oracle of Reason.

SIR.—The following, if deemed worthy of a place in the *Oracle*, is at your service. It is, with a few alterations, taken from the work of the late Walter Miller, gent.

Manchester.

JAMES MONK.

THE ABSURDITY, AND IMPOSSIBILITY
OF A GOD.

The old maxim, that nothing produces nothing, is not more evident, than that nothing can be made out of nothing. If the deity has made matter, he must either have possessed the substance in himself, or procured it from something else. But if he be immaterial, he could not have possessed it in himself, and if it be not in him, he could not communicate what he has not to give. There is nothing more obvious, than that no being can give what he does not possess.

If the deity be necessarily self-existent, he can possess no more than he inherits by this necessary existence. It makes no difference however high or low, great or small, we suppose the being, as every being is limited by the capacities of its nature. The deity is like all other beings in this respect, he can no more give what he does not possess, than any other being can give that which it has not. It is therefore impossible, on the supposition of his being immaterial, that the deity could be the creator of matter. Again, if he possessed matter in himself, originally and inherently, he cannot be considered either as immaterial, or as its creator. In every view of the subject it is perfectly evident, that, if the deity made matter, he must either have possessed the substance of it in himself, or procured it from something without him, and in either of these cases he cannot be considered as its creator. If he made it out of himself, the substance must have existed in him, and constituted a part of his essence. But if it constituted a part of his essence, it must be as necessarily self-existent as he is. And if he made it of something existing without him, he was not its creator in this case more than the other.

NOW READY.—THE GREAT DRAGON CAST OUT. 1s. 3d., cloth, 1s. 9d.

NEXT WEEK.—PALEY REFUTED IN HIS OWN WORDS. By G. J. Holyoake. 6d.

One of our English newspapers (the *Morning Chronicle*), after giving copious extracts from the church of England book of common prayer, said: "How early is the great business of deception commenced! The mouths of our very babes and sucklings are systematically filled with falsehoods, and even in their spelling-books they are nursed in delusion. It would seem that it is never too early to learn lies. A system of education *ab ovo*, which should exclude only notorious falsehood, would be a perfect curiosity—a thing that has never yet been seen."

NOTICE.

C. W., the "Maid of Midian" is an American poem.

Received—From G. J. H., Rights—in answer to W. Powell. Difficulties—an answer for C. H. The Newcastle-upon-Tyne Anti-Superstition Society. Morality without Religion. And the Socialist God.

From M. Q. R., Edinbro' Hunt after the Infidels. Prospects of the Age, by T. P. Pantheistic Revelations, by a Believer. Physical Force and Moral Power, by W. J. B.

James Norfor—a letter has been forwarded to him.

Mr. Riley Perry's tract has received consideration, but no means are at present available for its employment.

SUBSCRIPTIONS,

For the Anti-Persecution Union.

Mr. Field, London (monthly) .. £0 1 0

Mr. Thomas, do. (ditto) .. 0 1 0

T. B., London..... 0 1 0

It is earnestly requested that all Collector's Subscription Books, issued by the old committee of the Anti-Persecution Union in London and other places, be immediately forwarded to the union's office, 40, Holywell-street, Strand, London. G. J. H., Sec.

ERRATA.—In 'The Cant of Christianity', last number, 1st col. 258th p. 13-15th lines from top, dele *and*, and read *his station. his relations. he is not allowed, &c.* In 1st col. 259th p. 18th line from top of par., read *former* to the *latter*, and four lines below, *is* for *his*. In p. 260th 2nd col. 11th line from bottom, dele "In."

One Penny.

LIBRARY OF REASON

This Day is Published,

IV. *The Supposed Necessity of Deceiving the Vulgar.* By Julian Hibbert.

Printed and Published by WILLIAM CHILTON, No. 40, Holywell-street, Strand, London. Saturday, August 5, 1843.

THE ORACLE OF REASON:

Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE."

First Editor—Charles Southwell, imprisoned for twelve months and fined £100, for Blasphemy in No. 4.
Second Editor—George Jacob Holyoake, imprisoned for six months, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.
Third Editor—Thomas Paterson, imprisoned for one month, for Blasphemous Placards, in London.
Vendors—George Adams, imprisoned for one month for selling No. 25, in Cheltenham; and Harriet Adams, his wife, arrested for selling No. 4, in the same town.

No. 87.]

EDITED BY WILLIAM CHILTON.

[PRICE 1D.]

EDINBRO' HUNT AFTER THE INFIDELS.

Let the Scotch snakes be scotch'd, if not killed.

Good must come of this last move of the twaddlers. To what extent this last attack shall be made to minister to the interests of free discussion, will depend altogether upon the friends of that principle. Perseverance in action, must be the watchword. Action! action! are the first, second, and third requisites for the protection of those who are assailed, the defeat of the persecutors, and the security of the public. Action in defending *all* whose liberties are attacked, from the paw-paw censure, or half-dead-and-alive praise of quibbling ninies. Action in organising, or helping to organise, or improving the present organisation, for a still more efficient and wide-spreading "union." Action in collecting and furnishing funds.

During our recess, while the god-defending league are rubbing their skulls together to mend their counts, the "Anti-Persecution Union" may be strengthening their ranks in every direction. Let no exertions be thought non-essential or trivial. We cannot be too strong. Whatever the force of the bigot-camp, however indecisive and undetermined, and partly swayed by the prudentials among them, we shall never lose our labour by fortifying our position. The partial relaxation of the "union," after the active exertions of last year, left them in a less potent position to act with energy and effect in an emergency. The thing has to be almost done over again. From previous experience, however, and the newly-awakened energies of the committee, with the known activity of Holyoake, the present secretary, the lovers of liberty may be afforded the means of extensively benefitting the cause.

At a time like this, after an attack from the plunder-bands, nothing can so materially injure us, and inspire them with fresh audacity—as inaction. There must be nothing like wavering, temporising, or indecision. Whenever they aim at us, they have already received a blow, perhaps a succession of very heavy blows. Continue

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to belabour them. Pelt Paine at them—discharge *Voltaire* full in their faces—let fly a volley from old *Carline*—batter them with *Mirabeau*—and give them a broadside or a scourging from the *Oracle*. Is there any who think this a too bold and reckless course? No, I say—emphatically, no. I know it, have proved it. Paterson can confirm it. For his one shop there are now two in the same street, with the vending, in the one case covertly, it is true, in the other openly, of his "Trial" and the *Oracle of Reason*. Before the unparalleled boldness of the Holywell-street doings, that dozy animal the public, which between its meals of excitement falls into the lethargic state of the boa-constrictor, till another gorge brings on another round of action and torpor—that great unwieldy news-feeding creature, before this great epoch, scarce knew of the existence of the naughty publications. As the placard-agitation progressed—as the popinjay hunters after notoriety and praise, from their small-beer circle—the Bruces, Pierces, and Greens, attacked, Quixote like, Paterson's windmills—I mean, windows—as these doings were going on—the unwieldy beast opened its sleepy eyes, shook its huge body, pricked up its long ears, cocked up its long tail (I have metamorphosed it from a boa into a nondescript), and began to find out there was other preaching beside sermons—other principles laid down besides philosophical and politico-economical ones—and other placards exhibited besides those containing "alarming sacrifices," increasing distress in the manufacturing districts, "selling under cost price," and "positively the last week but one." As the "broad-sides" were poured out against the quacks and the ranters—as the "scourge" was administered to the "god-mongers"—as "damnation was dealt out to the hell-mongers"—as all sorts of godly scoundrelisms were unsparingly exposed and vigorously lashed—the great beast felt perplexed. Its brain, the press, which does all its thinking-work for it, and which it obeys as implicitly as the hand or leg does the cranium of the reflective man, had not till then, poor strutting creature, condescend to notice naughty infidelities. But as the blatant

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Times, and the Jenkinised *Post*, the doting *Herald*, the roaring, thick-headed *Bull*, the pragmatical *Standard*, and even the pert, prim *Globe*, descended from their stilts, and came to fisty-cuffs with the "miscreants of the Holywell-street den"—then the metropolitan monster, as aforesaid, from being greatly bothered, and mightily wondering, fell into a awful fix, then waxed 'tarnal wrathey, as the Yankees have it, and lashed its tail, till it got into a furious taking. "Leviathan"-like, it would have frightened the common run of folks from their propriety. Was there any so fierce as to "dare stir him up?" Yes, *Thomas Paterson*, the Scot—*Wallace, Bruce, and Paterson*—would redeem Scotland in the eyes of a Johnson. "His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal." The scales of justice were evenly balanced for Paterson. "Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out." Oh, enlightened and light-dispensing public, see what a prophet in your favour old Job was! "Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron." Here's prophecy of the smoky monster—let nobody make a bottle of smoke of this. "His heart is as firm as a stone, yea, is hard as a piece of the nether mill-stone." Now, won't the starched gossellers let us off, after turning their own gibberish into prophetic sense? Now, I think, maugre old Job, and with the blessing of Beelzebub, who has always got the upper hand, we may "draw out leviathan with a hook," we may "cast a hook into his nose," and may force him to "make a covenant" with us. The best hook is the bill-hook, sometimes, with such as, like farmer Brigg's bull, won't listen to reason—and when the disconcerted, squabbling, scrambling intrusionist, and non-intrusionist, puseyite and dissenting, papist and protestant cut-throats, find we stand steadfastly and compactly together, dealing out two for their one, increasing by tenfold publicity our sentiments for every prosecution, with or without imprisonment, then will they be ready to "make a covenant with us." Then, and not till then, may they hope to obtain some respite from our fiery assaults on godly ferocity, malignity, and blood-thirstiness—then may we content ourselves with the bare exposure of the god-imposture, in the way best calculated to convert, instead of, as now, proving to them that we can make them uneasy in the precise ratio of the torments they heap on those who insist on the same latitude they themselves claim.

To the "indecentcy" jabberers, I say, in one word, let's have none of your second-hand cant, about the indecentcy, real or pretended, of cheap periodicals or other works, provided there are people nasty enough to buy them. Every man to his

taste—who's to be the censor? Let us have no prating about the modern overt obscenity, which is but a supply to meet a demand, while, paraded on every counter, and thrust into every hand, is the covert obscenity of the filthy Jew-book, whose "heroines are strumpets, an account of whose debaucheries is fit only for the hell of human imagination—which contains passages so outrageously disgusting and scandalously indecent, that were it not called the word of a god, no modest woman would suffer it to be read in her house."

Support Robinson—support Finlay—support Paterson, should he bring the god-factions on him. Hold by the persecuted. Up and be doing—or be damned!—M.Q.R.

WAR! WAR! WAR!

War with the Jew-god, the son, & the ghost!

Jehovah cried, "Adzooks!
We don't half like the fellow's looks;
Unless our eyes are in a fog,
It's Paterson, by his physog.!"—*Great Dragon.*

OUR readers will perceive by the following copy of a bill, that the indefatigable monster-man Paterson, has unfurled his banner at the present seat of war, Edinburgh. "The Man's" old opponent, god, having shifted his scene of action from the metropolis of England to the metropolis of Scotland, Paterson lost no time in striking his tent and following him. We can fancy the consternation of the great "*I Am*," when he first perceived the bold, but neatly-printed challenge of our friend sticking on the walls of Modern Athens. We picture him to ourselves staring with astonishment, and rubbing his eyes with the cuff of his coat, doubtful of the fact of his being awake—and then, when scepticism was no longer possible, crying, in the elegant, but forcible, language of the immortal author of the *Great Dragon Cast Out*:

Where's Mike, with all his angel host?
And where's Our Son? and where's the Ghost?

In default of the ghost appearing, when called for, his lordship had recourse, coward like, to the dirty, sneaking, blue-coated villains of the police, who were industriously employed, when our last despatch was sent off, in tearing from the walls our gallant friend's challenge, that the dupes of their employer may not know of his poltroonery. Paterson says, "The police have taken a man I employed to carry a board, and kept him prisoner for an hour, when they released him, but detained the board. Could I afford it, the bills should be posted every night while the excitement lasts. The captain of police has promised to visit me—he has looked in at the window, but dared not come in without authority. The authorities here are fairly puzzled, flabbergasted—the bigots are at

their usual work of annoyance. I have already been threatened with a 'horse-whipping,' by one of the aristocrats of the town, so that you see I am in a fair way of promotion—but I laugh at them, and tell them to lay on." Bravo! such pluck would win any cause, good or bad.—ED. OF O.

ARREST OF PATERSON!

Edinburgh, Saturday, Aug. 5.

PATERSON was arrested this morning about eleven o'clock. I thought he would have been long since—but when the *posse committatus* did come, they quite took me by surprise. To bail him this day has been found impracticable, Saturday being quite a holiday with the Scotch law functionaries, at least, all the post-meridian portion of it. Up to three o'clock no examination had taken place. The seizure has caused an immense stir. Paterson's patron, the Procurator-Fiscal, is the prime mover in this, as in Robinson and Finlay's, business. A considerable number of tracts, pamphlets, &c. were pounced upon, by these precious law harpies—but few books of much value, for the sufficient reason, that the chief part of such books had been carefully removed prior to their arrival. C. SOUTHWELL.

Under the patronage of the Procurator-Fiscal.

PATERSON, AND CO.

(Of the Blasphemy Depôt, London)

BEG to acquaint infidels in general, and Christians in particular, that, in consequence of the immense demand for blasphemous works—the procurator-fiscal himself, having taken some hundreds of volumes from another shop in this city—they have, with a view to furnish the public with an ample supply, opened a depôt, at 38, WEST REGISTER-STREET.

PATERSON, and Co. will sell all kinds of printed works, which are calculated to enlighten, without corrupting—to bring into contempt the demoralising trash our priests palm upon the credulous as divine revelation—and to expose the absurdity of, as well as horrible effects springing from, *the debasing god idea!*

As the present brisk demand for printed works of the above-mentioned character, has been caused chiefly, if not altogether, by the procurator-fiscal's anxiety to become possessed of a large number of such invaluable productions, and as that functionary is doubtless eager to obtain more, Paterson and company beg most respectfully to inform him, the following is a list of *some* of the works now on sale:

"The Bible, an improper book for youth, and dangerous to the easily-excited brain—with immoral and contradictory passages therefrom." By Allah.—*Oracle of Reason* (atheistical).—*Investigator* (atheistical).—

"God *versus* Paterson," the extraordinary Bow-street police report.—"Good Sense," the book of books.—"Great Dragon Cast Out," a splendid satire on Milton's *Paradise Lost*.—*New Moral World*.—"Existence of Christ Disproved." By a German Jew.—Also the works of Mirabaud, Volney, Hume, Paine, Shelley, Robert Dale Owen, Frances Wright, Haslam, Strauss, Carlile, and other authors of reputation.

Also, just published, "The Defence of Thomas Finlay," who was charged before the High Court of Justiciary, on the 24th of July, with vending blasphemous works.

The Bible and other obscene works not sold at this shop.

PHYSICAL FORCE AND MORAL POWER.

The whole English press and every man of a civilised mind condemned the present system of tenure, so productive of reciprocal murders between landlords and tenants (hear, hear), for the landlord who turned his tenantry from their houses, to die in dykes and ditches, was as much a murderer as the tenant who, in the wild justice of his revenge, assassinated his landlord. (Hear hear.) The hundreds of assassinations committed by Irish landlords cried to heaven for vengeance, and he now called upon that class of the community to join him in getting rid of a system that was the cause of so much crime, misery, and sorrow, and that covered the land with blood. (Hear, hear.)—Speech of Daniel O'Connell.

"I have written thus much on physical force, because the article from which I have made a quotation at the head of this communication, in fact recommends it as a means of reforming the world, and as it is not a likely means of doing so, it ought to be denounced."—*Coventry Socialist Lecturer.*

"In 1783 Mr. Fox, in bringing forward a measure respecting Ireland, alluded to the fact that the ministry which preceded him had, even during the troublesome times at the commencement of the American war, refused to accede to the claims of Ireland on the subject of commerce, until the people had armed themselves; and when troops were withdrawn to fight our battles with our justly disaffected colonies, Ireland seized the opportunity of England's weakness, and gained those rights which had before been denied to her. Mr. Fox said, England had shown the Irish people that, if they wished to obtain *any* rights, they were not to do so by quiet remonstrances, but by *arming* themselves and *becoming* troublesome to this country."—*M. J. O'Connell.*

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Oracle of Reason* has pointed out that the physical force displayed in Ireland, has already made all parties entertain ideas of concession. When the state of Ireland was a question of moral power, when the agitation of her claims was confined to the deliberative assemblies of the nation, and made dependent on the improvement of public opinion;

all redress of wrongs was not only refused, but fresh injuries were proposed to be heaped upon the sister isle. By overt acts of violence, the Welch have got some of their grievances redressed. By physical force, catholic emancipation was obtained. By rebellion, equality of administration was established among the Canadians. These are instances almost before our eyes. A moral part of physical force is this, as evinced in the above cases, that tyrants, who may be called amiable people in society, never think people are oppressed, until they show a real sense of their wrongs, which produces conviction in the minds of their masters, and they begin to think the people worthy of their rights, who will risk something, even life, to obtain them. These are the sentiments of the more generous-minded and the intellectual portions of society, but physical force acts with equal power on the stupid and brutal. Physical force awakens their fears, no appeal can be made to their conscientiousness, but they are fully alive to their material interests. Security of life and property strikes home to their hearts—they had enjoyed more than its full possession at the expense of others—they had been living as robbers on the property of others. Your money or your life, was as much their maxim as the highwayman's, only they had not to present a pistol to the breasts of their victims, it was done for them by their representatives, the administrative—the legal and military executive. Their security of life and property become, therefore, the insecurity of life and property on the part of the oppressed, and it remains for the latter to restore the equilibrium. In the first place, it can only be produced by a general disorganisation of society, by altering the circumstances which make the security of the life and property of the few depend on the insecurity of life and property in the many. When the few, or even the equal, or the majority, find they will not be allowed to have all the advantages of living in society to themselves—that the disfranchised, outlawed, unsocialised remainder, do not care to keep the property or the life which is left to them on these terms, and will make the insecurity of life and property reciprocal—all thus made alike for the worse, the insecurities will begin to think of making the securities universal, the same to all, which is justice and equality, though people were not aware of it before. All this is felt in Ireland, and things would long ago have arrived at their natural solution, had not the curse of religion and the junction of Ireland to England interfered, which destroyed all the proportions, and prevented the due course of events. Nevertheless, reforms, the effects of physical force, have operated, and will occur, spite of physical force to the contrary.

Cromwell almost exterminated the Irish roman catholics, yet the proportions of physical force have since vastly increased in their favour, and they have successively obtained a share in commerce—made obsolete, as they acquired strength, the penal laws, have finally procured their repeal, and catholic emancipation—though they had to suffer the intermediate massacre of 1798, minor slaughters, and assassinations at the hands of legal justice, the parsons, the landlords, and moral power in general. It seems to me the nature of wrong to grow up a physical force power in opposition. Even the annihilation of the latter is only a temporary remedy, as such a principal in power is sure to create antagonists, sooner or later, from its own ranks. Ireland would decide the right between itself and the protestant established church, it has the physical force on its side—but England comes in with its state, its exchequer, its army and its navy, the name of sovereignty, the aid of foreign physical force, and war, to support the ascendancy of the wrong over the right, of the few over the many, of inequality and injustice, over justice and equality. But physical force will conquer England, even her brutal power, which is too far removed from the cause to feel the immediate effects of physical force, but would eventually, when they came to weigh upon her finances, and at home and abroad to endanger not only the security of her subjects' property, but eventually of their lives.

What is with many the theory of statesmanship, is never to advocate a principle, never support an extension of freedom, till, judging from the signs of the times, they think the people ripe for it. Never commit yourself, say they, to an advanced post, unless you think the people, the mass, are ready to come up with you. These are axioms with liberals, whigs, many that are called radicals. The Tories, on the contrary, say, never make concessions until you are driven to them from behind, when you can withstand it no longer, give in a little, the least you can, there the judgment of the politician is shown—and if the demands are too great, and your measures are taken so as to ensure success, no outcry behind and easy victory before, use physical force to the utmost extent. Some use the utmost severity of the law to an insignificant minority, the Tories massacre a multitude rather than give in, with the same *sang froid* they would uncork a bottle of their favourite port. Witness Pitt against the liberals in England, his 1798 in Ireland, and the bottomless pit of debt into which he precipitated his country, in order, by indiscriminate bloodshed on the continent, to stop the spread of liberal opinions.

All that we erring mortals, a gradation above the monkey, can go by, is the experience of the past. That things will happen

quite otherwise than they have done in a moderate period, is nothing more than a prophetic announcement based upon no foundation. In the time present and immediately preceding, we have seen physical force paramount, for better or worse, but we have seen no great progress made in society, no revolution, as it is called, taking place without physical force. Some minor advances may have been made consequent on the greater, which have appeared the results of moral progress, but may be traced to a more physical cause.

The purely intellectual beings, the lesser portion of mankind, must keep alight the torches of truth, march in front—the advanced posts in civilisation, volunteer forlorn-hopes, bide their time and that of the world, but they must make up their minds to be often martyrs. They act insensibly upon mankind, instruct the few, who act energetically upon society, and a union of moral and physical force takes place, which, still a minority, often forces the world on in spite of the majority. But there is nothing so effectual as physical force wrong in producing physical force right, the most glaring injustice cannot go on without violent, and ultimately successful, efforts in establishing justice, by the very means by which it was so long violated—but if it will come a purer sense of justice, which as long as the mass of mankind were not made to feel by their senses, they were not able to perceive by their minds. The propositions of O'Connell are conformable to a much better system of government, one that would be nearer to that of the United States, than any other in the old world. The Irish have been made to see this, by the immense physical wrong which has been perpetrated upon them. The injustice of an established church is a more self-evident evil to them than to any other body of dissenters, and therefore they have and do appeal to physical force, and, in the event of success, promise the voluntary system. Now, in other religious wars, neither side ever proposed such a complete result, and even in the struggles of our nonconformists against the church, as seen in the opposition to the factory education bill, ascendancy was to be obtained of one over the other, or mere toleration. Persecution has driven the Irish to fight for a great principle—not an insulting toleration, not a share in a common wrong, but an equal right for all parties.

Making the greatest allowance for moral power and the force of truth, as far as the experience of the world goes, of what weight are they in the scales, when weighed against the interests of mankind. Suppose the truth proved—the falsehood of religion acknowledged—a better system of government for the future, capable of demonstration to our rulers—is it in the nature of man for the

clergy to give up their tithes, the higher classes the emoluments of office and situation, if the people did not insist upon these concessions on the principle of the greatest happiness to the greatest possible number? Would not the church, if infidel to the core, say, why, should we give up our advantages and position in society, not only our comforts, but perhaps, in some instances, our bread—why should we deprive our children of an inheritance and provision in these abuses, when the people, unless told, do not perceive their loss, and do not require of us to make a sacrifice to their numbers? Reasons would be as plentiful as blackberries—according to the common saying—why they should keep the good things of this life, and make Lazaruses of the rest of society. Religion, though a deceit, say they, is good for the people, a well-paid church is all the better, says David Hume, keeps the priesthood and the people free from fanaticism. The crown, the state, and the church, as at present constituted, and from time immemorial, have kept up a delusion in favour of each and all—statesmen, even churchmen and philosophers, have often avowed their sense of the deception practised upon the people.* Not the convictions of the people, nor the habit of humbly remonstrating or petitioning, but only acting up to their demands, will preserve what a certain number of people see are their rights, when their oppressors are blind to the circumstance. It is then only the show of physical force on their part, and the determination to appeal to it, will give them the victory.

To go further back, the American revolution, the era of American independence, and her institutions, the effects of physical force, which in the course of progressive reform, most political philosophers, Paine, De Tocqueville, and Laing, among others, think must be introduced into the old world, come under the denouncement of the Coventry Socialist Lecturer, and must be considered by him as no reform. That revolution involved the consequence so dreaded by the C. S. L., another nation, France, aided America “In her struggles, and she did not find by experience that pulling down one tyranny, by physical and partly foreign, force was merely the prelude to the establishment of another.” The *Nationel* reminds Ireland of the assistance she gave to America, and promises her the same. France did herself ample justice in severing so great a continent from England, without losing the fruits of it by trying to establish herself in her place. We may depend upon it that France would think it a sufficiently glorious result, and

* This is admirably shown in an essay of Julian Hibbert's, “On the Necessity of Deceiving the Vulgar,” published in the “Library of Reason,” price one penny. Hetherington.

one vastly to her interests, to give a blow to England still nearer at home, without idly dreaming of occupying part of the United Kingdom as a conquered province. Switzerland obtained her freedom by physical force—and has continued nearly ever since a federal republic, divided into separate states—what we term a repeal of the union. Holland, by the exercise of physical force for nearly a century, disengaged herself from Spain, and became another federal republic—the seven, I think, united provinces. The result sought to be obtained was not untaxed tea, but the privilege of thinking as they liked, which certainly they enjoyed in a greater degree long before any other nation. Our readers will recollect the glowing and picturesque description given of Amsterdam, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, in the “Library of Reason,” “Life of Spinoza.” The Dutch had the assistance of England, and the sovereignty over them was offered to Elizabeth, or to one of her courtiers, which she refused. They did not fall, therefore, from the frying-pan into the fire. It remains to be decided whether Holland was better as a sand-bank, peopled by fishermen, and governed by the Spanish inquisition, or such as we have seen her, with the freedom of action and thought gained by one of the most bloody and longest exercise of physical force ever waged by a poor subject against a mighty master-state. Toleration and the right of private judgment, for the completeness of which we are contending, I suppose will be allowed to be goods *per se*, and I think history will show that they have only been obtained by physical force. Holland showed the way, and obtained the most successful result of the times. Long were the wars waged between the protestants and catholics in Germany, which never ceased till comparative security of life and property were obtained for both parties—when these conditions were violated war began afresh, and it has ended in the professors of the various religions uniting in towns, villages, families—the same church and the same house, and living, contrary to the words of Christ, in a bond of love. As far as religion goes, the parallelogram societies of Robert Owen could not be attended with better results. In France, the two parties fought out the great difference of the age, and the result was that the huguenots, or protestants, were always allowed more or less of liberty, or else they took it with arms in their hands. There was the edict of Nantes, which was repealed by Louis the fourteenth, at the latter end of the seventeenth century, when he was at the height of his power, had protested against the pope and separated from Rome, as far as his anti-Gallican church went. The circumstances were certainly against the protestants, the dissenters from

the establishment, but instead of resisting they patiently submitted, and were not put upon the same footing till the infidels fought it out for them in their great physical force revolution. Now, there was no civil war in England between the two religions, and therefore there was less toleration than on the continent, where parties similarly divided, as in England, would not allow themselves to be oppressed by each other, but appealed to physical force. The English went over from side to side according to their interest—moral power in its peaceful operation—and made spoil of those who were actuated by higher principles. Public justice in fires, executions, and confiscations, pains and penalties continued up to the present time, being the cost of thinking differently from those in power—a use of physical force which, strange to say, even in these days reconciles its exercise even to the consciences of the oppressed! The roman catholics, persecuted as they were, equipped vessels and raised soldiers, at their own expence, to fight the Spanish armada. This made no difference with Elizabeth—and when they might have made a party, by espousing a title to the throne contrary to that of James the first, they supported him, on his promise to grant them relief, and got their reward in the moral power and public justice of unmitigated persecution. Then it was that one man determined to die for the rest, he determined to involve in common ruin himself and the assembled tyrants of his country, as Samson did the Philistines, when they made sport only of his private wrongs—Guy Fawkes, knowing there was no security for the life and property of himself and his co-religionists, determined to sell his existence dearly, and executing justice on the murderers and robbers of his country, to commit suicide and assassinate king, lords, and commons. He fell a sacrifice, but what was the result? Blackstone says it struck such a panic into James, that spite of the remonstrances of the fanatics, he dared not execute the laws, public justice, and moral power, against the catholics. The roman catholics, afterwards, instead of forming a party, intriguing with the physical force men of the day, or showing their own physical force, chose to keep with what is called moral power and public justice, and to support the declining interests of that tower of strength, the king's name. King Charles the first began the war, by making a sacrifice to moral power and public justice, and hanged two roman catholic priests whom he had the luck to meet with at York, which act so far made him merit his assassination by Oliver Cromwell—another deed done in the name of public justice and moral power.

W. J. B.

(To be continued.)

THE SOCIALIST GOD.

HAVE read the curious letter upon this subject, by A Coventry Socialist Lecturer. The argument is, that the Coventry god is superior to the Burnley one. The case stands thus, Burnley is in the potteries, a bigotted and Methodist-ridden district. Coventry is an intelligent and comparatively liberal city. The Burnley deity was put forth in 1839, the Coventry one in 1843. Now, taking into account the greater enlightenment of Coventry, and its five years of extra experience—is Coventry's deity a shade superior to Burnley's production? I am quite content to leave the extracts furnished by the lecturer for the consideration of readers. Let them be compared with the many spoken addresses of the Worcester branch, published in *Oracle* 76. The lecturer says that the address is the echo of the "Outline." I grant it. But does not the lecturer know that recent congresses have thrown off the wadding-clothes of the Outline? Socialism acknowledges no "rational religion," no "creative power," now. If I have spoken censuringly of Coventry, it is that I am anxious to see it in the front ranks of socialist progression, not the mere echoist of an obsolete Outline. I take great pleasure in adding, that the pages of the *Oracle* testify that the Coventry Socialist lecturer is himself very much in advance of the address which he defends.

If "H. U., president of the Burnley branch," will send me his address to the *Oracle* office, I will forward him the original address from which I extracted, and he shall judge himself of its genuineness.

G. J. H.

THEORY OF REGULAR GRADATION.

XLI.

CONCLUDED in my last my extracts from Mr. White, and I shall now proceed, in conformity with my plan, to give Mr. Lyell's gist of M. Lamarck's theory of transmutation of species. Mr. Lyell says:

"Before we can advance a step, we must be able to define precisely the meaning which we attach to the term species. This is even more necessary in geology than in the ordinary studies of the naturalist; for they who deny that such a thing as a species exists, concede nevertheless that a botanist or zoologist may reason as if the specific character were constant, because they connect their observations to a brief period of time. Just as the geographer, in constructing his maps from century to century, may proceed as if the apparent places of the fixed stars remained absolutely the same, and as no alteration was brought about by the recession of the equinoxes, so it is said in

the organic world, the stability of a species may be taken as absolute, if we do not extend our views beyond the narrow period of human history; but let a sufficient number of centuries elapse, to allow of important revolutions in climate, physical geography, and other circumstances, and the characters, say they, of the descendants of common parents may deviate indefinitely from their original type.

"Now, if these doctrines be tenable, we are at once presented with a principle of incessant change in the organic world, and no degree of dissimilarity in the plants and animals which may formerly have existed, and are found fossil, would entitle us to conclude that they may not have been the prototypes and progenitors of the species now living. Accordingly, M. Geoffroy St. Hilaire has declared his opinion, that there has been an uninterrupted succession in the animal kingdom effected by means of generation, from the earliest ages of the world up to the present day; and that the ancient animals whose remains have been preserved in the strata, however different, may nevertheless have been the ancestors of those now in being. Although this notion is not generally received, we feel that we are not warranted in assuming the contrary, without fully explaining the data and reasoning by which we conceive it may be refuted.

"We shall begin by stating as concisely as possible all the facts and ingenious arguments by which the theory has been supported, and for this purpose we cannot do better than offer the reader a rapid sketch of Lamarck's statement of the proofs which he regards as confirmatory of the doctrine, and which he has derived partly from the works of his predecessors, and in part from original investigations.

"We shall consider his proofs and inferences in the order in which they appear to have influenced his mind, and point out some of the results to which he was led while boldly following out his principles to their legitimate consequences.

"The name of species, observes Lamarck, has been usually applied to 'every collection of similar individuals, produced by other individuals like themselves.' This definition, he admits, is correct, because every living individual bears a very close resemblance to those from which it springs. But this is not all which is usually implied by the term species, for the majority of naturalists agree with Linnæus in supposing that all the individuals propagated from one stock have certain distinguishing characters in common which will never vary, and which have remained the same since the creation of each species.

"In order to shake this opinion, Lamarck

enters upon the following line of argument. The more we advance in the knowledge of the different organised bodies which cover the surface of the globe, the more our embarrassment increases, to determine what ought to be regarded as a species, and still more how to limit and distinguish genera. In proportion as our collections are enriched, we see almost every void filled up, and all our lines of separation effaced; we are reduced to arbitrary determinations, and are sometimes fain to seize upon the slight differences of mere varieties, in order to form characters for what we choose to call a species, and sometimes we are induced to pronounce individuals but slightly differing, and which others regard as true species, to be varieties."

ADDRESS
OF THE
ANTI-PERSECUTION UNION.

THE new committee proceed to address the public upon the present state of the union, the principles which regulate it, and the demands now made for its renewed exertions.

The committee, upon their appointment, found various reports in circulation, to the effect that moneys had been subscribed which had never found their intended destination. No time has been lost in the investigation of these rumours, and they have been discovered to have originated in some irregularities in the management of the late committee, consequent upon a great press of duties devolving on a few individuals. But no case is known to the committee in which a single farthing has remained unacknowledged, or has been improperly applied. The committee will esteem it an especial favour, if any party, who has the slightest ground for dissatisfaction, will immediately write them on the matter, that it may be gone into, and rectified.

To give complete satisfaction, a detailed statement—although very lengthy—of the receipts and expenditure of the union, has been prepared and placed for inspection in the Branch A I, and Rotunda, Coffee Rooms.

To ensure perfect regularity in future transactions, all subscriptions are to be paid into the hands of the secretary, or be directed for him, to the office, 40 Holywell-street, Strand, and he will immediately return a written receipt for the same, and afterwards acknowledge the sum in the *Oracle of Reason*.

The editor of this paper has placed its columns at the service of the committee, promising to give the union's communications the preference of other matter. Their addresses and acknowledgments of subscriptions will, therefore, appear in the *Oracle of Reason*. In the *New Moral World* an objection has been made, by a Newcastle so-

ciety, to the union using this paper as its organ—but it may suffice, here, to say that at present no other paper, so eligible, is at the union's service.

The mixed nature of the Edinburgh cases of blasphemy, have occasioned considerable discussion, as to the legitimate sphere of the union's operations. The committee have taken a course which will probably set this question at rest, to the satisfaction of all parties. They have adopted as their guide the principles which have hitherto characterised the union in practice. These principles may be thus stated.

The Anti-Persecution Union appears hitherto to have assisted persons who have been prosecuted for the publication, whether by press, tongue, or pen, of *theological* opinions.

It appears, also, that the persons assisted by the union have manifested a disposition to exercise the right of publishing the prosecuted sentiments, from a conviction of the public utility of doing so.

The union appears never to have identified, or disassociated, itself with the opinions or sentiments of the persons it has assisted. The union has simply aided such persons when prosecuted.

Further, the union appears to have taken such steps, as to them seemed fitting, to prevent future prosecutions. These steps have been publishing the reports of trials of the prosecuted—holding public meetings—calling on the legislature to repeal the laws sanctioning such proceedings—collecting funds to support the victims of religious intolerance, and issuing addresses in favour of the free publication of *theological* opinions.

Next week the union's address will be upon the cases of Messrs. Finlay and Robinson of Edinburgh, and, in the interim, every friend of freedom of expression is called upon to forward subscriptions to aid these victims of an unjust law. G. JACOB HOLYOAKE, Sec.

IMPORTANT NOTICE.

Every person, in London and in the country, who holds any Subscription Books, issued by the former Committee of the *Anti-Persecution Union*, is very earnestly requested to forward them without delay to the secretary, G. J. Holyoake, 40, Holywell-street, Strand, London.

One Penny.

LIBRARY OF REASON.

This Day is Published,

IV. *The Supposed Necessity of Deceiving the Vulgar.* By Julian Hibbert.

Printed and Published by WILLIAM CHILTON, No. 40, Holywell-street, Strand, London.
Saturday, August 12, 1843.

THE ORACLE OF REASON:

Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE."

First Editor—Charles Southwell, imprisoned for twelve months and fined £100, for Blasphemy in No. 4.
Second Editor—George Jacob Holyoake, imprisoned for six months, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.
Third Editor—Thomas Paterson, imprisoned for one month, for Blasphemous Placards, in London.
Sellers—George Adams, imprisoned for one month for selling No. 25, in Cheltenham; and
Harriet Adams, his wife, arrested for selling No. 4, in the same town.

[No. 88.]

EDITED BY WILLIAM CHILTON.

[PRICE 1d.]

PROSPECTS OF THE AGE.

THERE cannot be a more pleasing task for believers in human progression, than to compare the present age with the past—to compare the taste, liberality, morality, and general intelligence of the people of the former period, with those of our own day. The improvement that has taken place is so evident, that only the religiously-diseased attempt to dispute it. Some persons there are, who admit the intellectual, but not the moral, improvement of the people—from the vast amount of vice and misery that exists. But it does not follow that vice and crime have increased, because they have extended. Drunkenness, although alleged as on the increase, is really on the decrease. Mr. Francis Place, in his evidence before the committee of the House of Commons, on drunkenness, stated that, in 1736, the number of dram-shops within the bills of mortality was 20,000, and in 1832, was not more than 5000, with a far more than double population, and so all over England in proportion. The amusements of the people have evidently improved, and are much more intellectual than they were in the last century. The costly and disgusting "old English sports," bull baiting and cock fighting were called, and have given way to the coffee-rooms, lecture-rooms, and museums, and the numbers who attend these various places form a mirror of the times. The great and increasing desire for reading all kinds of scientific works, and for investigating disputed subjects—the position to question the utility of theological doctrines—the demand for works relating on these subjects, are direct evidence of the improvement of the mass. The desire for political reform—the gradual decline of religion all over the world—the increased toleration of the priesthood—the comparative freedom of speech—the struggles of bigots to regain their lost position, lead to the inevitable conclusion that the people have increased in knowledge and wisdom, and must have increased in happiness.

The alleged increase of christianity is very often adduced, as accounting for the

more intelligent feeling now prevailing amongst the working population—but this statement is put forward by some to prevent the discovery that intelligence spreads in spite of, not in consequence of, christianity. By others, this argument is used, because the advocates of the theology have of late been making desperate efforts to trump up their views, by dwelling on the horrors of infidelity—and why? Simply because infidelity and atheism have increased, not religion—that has, in fact, diminished—and those who think otherwise, will best be set right by referring to the Bishop of Exeter's speeches in the House of Lords, two years ago, on socialism, and to the whig and tory press during the placard agitation, last winter, who talked every morning of the damning progress of atheism. The great increase of standard works of the most atheistic character, demonstrates religion's decline in this country.

It is now more customary for christians to boast of religion's advance amongst the savage hordes of other climes—thus implying that an ignorant, is better than an enlightened, people, for its superannuated nonsense.

But savages are not so lost to decency and propriety, as not to feel loathing and disgust at the intrusion of christianity among them, and they never lose an opportunity of shaking off its debasing yoke.

A few evenings ago, Mr. Holyoake made some important statements, at the London Theological Association, relative to the decline of christianity throughout the world. He produced extracts furnished by a gentleman of Worcester, from the British and Foreign Review, on Lamartine's Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, for, if I am not mistaken, January, 1836. They were as follow:

"We come to later times—and here, in our century an equally strange ignorance is to be found in Europe of things as they are. M. De Lamartine has ventured to inform his co-religionists that proselytism to christianity does not take place among the mohametans—nay, that it is impossible. This is much, but not all—proselytism is now

rapidly going on from christianity to islamism. We state, from our own observation, the fact of proselytism among the Greeks, Bulgarians, and Georgians. We have conversed with individuals of all these races, who have become mussulmans. The extent to which this goes on it may be impossible to state with any degree of accuracy, but it is considerable. This is not of to-day—a century ago there were no Albanian mohametsans—there are now above a million. The Slavonic populations were all christians—they now reckon two millions of mohametsans. The Greeks of Europe have been subject to less change—yet, considerable numbers, though no large bodies, that we are aware of, have embraced islamism. Not so the Asiatic Greeks—the district of Off, which contains a large portion of the Greek empire of Trapezantium, have all become mussulmans. They speak Greek still (while, strange to say, the *Haichrum*, or armenian Greeks, the Greeks of the Greek church of Asia Minor, speak *Turkish*), and preserving the scholastic temperament of their race, have all of them applied themselves to the study of the mussulman law, and are to be found all over the empire as doctors, judges, and scribes. In each village they tell you the year when it pleased god to enlighten them, and deliver them from idolatry and licentious habits. The curds, and many armenians, passed in a large mass from christianity to islamism, on the refusal of the patriarchs of the Greek churches to permit them to use milk and curds during the long fast—and these pastoral people have often no other means of subsistence. Even the Jews have been converted to islamism. The Georgians in the Turkish territory have, within fifty years, begun to abandon christianity—their conversion is now almost complete.”

Another writer says of the Georgians:

“Those who have become mohametsans, seem to have entirely abjured the characteristics of their race. They have become sober, chaste, and hospitable. These are habits of their new faith. Their character has acquired dignity, by belonging to the honoured class. In confirmation of this change of spirit, the establishment of their schools in each village *dates from the epoch of its conversion*.”

“The reason of all this success,” says the reviewer, “perhaps lies in the fact that the mohametsans practise those virtues which the christians only talk about.”

Surely this is an encouraging sign—the present is an age of religious exposé, and the vestibule to its tomb. The mohametsans are utilitarians—so cannot afford to be christians. And the people of this country and of Ireland, ask what utility there is in supporting a useless and expensive religion?

And what utility is there in prosecutions, in exactions, in the murderous, bloody, and devastating wars undertaken to gratify ambition, pious knavery, or the supposed caprice of a christian deity? The world is awaking to this monstrous folly. The struggle now in England destroys the influence of the trinity. The above quotation from the Quarterly and the unanimous assertion of the tory press, prove the statement. England is manifesting a sceptical spirit beyond all example in her history. Atheism is daily taking a place like that which science holds in the world, as being the result of inquiry. Let it take its right place, and it will be as impossible that it should not advance, as it is impossible that religion should not decline. T. P.

ASSASSINATION.

To the Editor of the Oracle of Reason.

SIR.—Perceiving that the recommendation to assassinate the protestant parsons of Ireland has been again brought under discussion, and that a long article has appeared in vindication of such a measure, I cannot, as a reader and advocate of the *Oracle*, from a period soon after its commencement, refrain from attempting to have *my* say on the subject.

I will premise that I am quite of G. J. H.'s opinion, as expressed in his article in No. 81: “In the republic of letters every man should be heard in his own way and by his own words.” I am not in the least offended that W. J. B. should be permitted to recommend assassination, any more than if he were allowed to advise, in a kindred spirit, a wholesale system of pocket-picking. Neither am I shocked at the apparent atrocity of such sentiments; but *grieved*, I confess, at their extreme folly, and the greater folly, if possible, of endeavouring “to out-Herod-Herod”—“to *shock the shockers*,” as you, Mr. Editor, euphoniously put it. There is one consolation to the true friends of freedom, that W. J. B.'s short-sighted advice is not likely to be followed: the common sense of all righteous and enlightened men will reject such a proposal, as unworthy of the moral dignity which should be inseparable from their characters. Yes, I contend that assassination is, in regard to life, just what picking-pockets, or shop-lifting, is in regard to property, and the man who can have the meanness, the cowardice, and the dishonesty to deliberately recommend either of these proceedings, I could not help avoiding as I would a hissing viper or any other noxious reptile. My hope is that such sentiments have escaped the *shockers of the shockers* of the *Oracle* unguardedly, and that they have defended them from a mere spirit of *combativeness*.

political assassin would resolve thus—These noxious individuals have tyrannised over an injured people; I, as one of the people, will secretly cut their throats or blow their brains out—the political *pick-pocket*, or foot-thief, thus—They have unjustly taken the fruit of the people's labour, and become rich, and will rifle their pockets as they walk the streets, or strip them of all they have on the highway. He who would defend assassination must be prepared to defend petty larceny.

As a question of policy, what absurdity to imagine that the catholic-priest-loving population of Ireland could be essentially benefited by the murder of a few protestant priests! Besides, assassination once begun, where should or would it end? "Those who live in glass-houses should not throw stones." Doubtless the lives of W. J. B. and W. C. could as easily be terminated as those of the parsons, by a well-directed aim with a dagger or gun. Suppose Ireland were at this moment an atheistic republic, founded upon absolute justice, and W. J. B. and yourself, Mr. Editor, were official servants or zealous supporters of that republic, remnant of the party now dominant, still existing, but comparatively powerless—suppose this state of things, and how would you like to hear of a project of the deposed party for your assassination, together with a dozen or so of your compeers? 'This we may call "argumentum ad hominem," and I should like it answered *to the point*.

I am not an advocate for Jesus' precept of turning the left cheek when smitten on the right, but I must always contend for the golden rule of all honest men—"Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you."

Or, if this rule is not acceptable, I will propose a new one *pour l'occasion*—"Do unto yourselves as you would do unto others." SUICIDE would be of quite as great utility as assassination. But pray, Mr. Editor, and all other assassins, do not imagine from what I have observed in this desultory manner, that I deny your right to murder me instead of yourselves, if you think fit: although, at the same time, I must be allowed to assert the greater right of society to bring you to martyrdom, by rope and gallows, for attempting to carry out your favourite principle. Every man's life is his property, and although I do not object to a man's murdering himself, I do most decidedly object to his being obliged to part with his life against his will, unless outraged society justly demand it as a penalty for crime. I therefore protest against war, or human butchery upon a large scale, as much as against assassination, which is nearly the same thing on a small scale—not but, that I would rather be

animated by the feelings of a soldier than those of an assassin.

It were easy for me to expatiate on the theme before me, and to show how much more noble and glorious means the sublime philosophy of pure atheism must and will adopt, in order to effect the emancipation of mankind from their various self-imposed tyrannies, moral and physical.

I cannot find it in my heart to hate the parsons for their bigotted and tyrannical conduct, so much as to pity them for their mental blindness, induced by the prejudices to which unavoidable circumstances have given birth. Moreover, I compassionate you, Mr. Editor, as well as W. J. B. that your views are not more expanded by philosophy, than to wish for the death of your enemies—to assassinate the parsons whose places and characters you would undoubtedly occupy at this moment, had you been subjected to the control of the same circumstances.

You speak contemptuously of *moral* force as opposed to *physical*, but *verbum sap.* With a fair field, the non-assassins of the *Oracle* will win the day, let the advocates for shooting people "from behind a hedge or through a window," advance what they may.

Sincerely hoping that all men may continue to walk abroad, and sleep, and die in their beds, without the fear of "base, bloody, and brutal" assassination, permit me to subscribe myself a well-wisher of the *Oracle of Reason*, and of all reasonable men connected therewith. DIAGORAS ATHEOS.

PHYSICAL FORCE AND MORAL POWER.

II.

PEOPLE somehow have had an odd fancy that there was something in sacrificing your own life for others, purchasing thereby any advantages for the rest of mankind—killing yourself, killing others, at the risk of your own life, or simply killing another, have been magnified into great virtues. Thus Quintus Curtius jumped into the gulph, and many others have followed his example. The christians have made a god of such a being, who died when he could not help it, and the preachers exclaim, what love!—he died for your sins. You could not have been redeemed without the suicide of a god—unless he had procured his own assassination, by offending against the laws of his country, and becoming a victim to public justice and moral power. Certainly I do not approve of the above principle carried so far, but it appears this particular species, and every other species, of physical force is at an im-

naense discount with the Coventry Socialist Lecturer, however much to his own interest. There are a sect of philosophers in France, who believe in the perfectibility of mankind, but that it must be accomplished by a species of assassination, and they mark the periods of great changes in history by the suffering or death of a victim. According to them, "There is an identity between men, nature, and humanity, and there are three degrees necessary to be accomplished before arriving at that perfection on which depends salvation, namely, trial, initiation, and expiation. They say the story of Christ is told in all religions and in all histories. Prometheus steals fire from heaven to benefit mankind; initiated thus into the secrets of the gods, he expiates his rashness in suffering. Orpheus, initiator of the people, loses Eurydice a second time, because he strove to penetrate the secrets of hell. Brutus releases the nobility from the authority of kings, and the blood of Lucretia flows in expiation. Virginia, later on, is the innocent victim sacrificed by her father; and this sacrifice consecrates the emancipation of the people, and initiates them into liberty."—*British and Foreign Quarterly Review*, pp. 385-6. So much for this elevation of the power of physical force, certainly one of the humbugs of the day, but founded on the experience of history. The exponents of this school, Vico, Michelet, who edited him, and Ballanche, who continued him, have seen that the progress of society has ever been involved in a contest of physical force, where the innocent, as well as the guilty, must sometimes become sacrifices, and out of this course of events in the past, they wish to make a necessity for the future, a religion, a law of providence. But we will leave theories and extremes and return to historical facts, and the more common sense of the matter.

The most memorable instance of the kind of assassination which a nation may adopt in vindication of natural justice is the Sicilian Vespers. Though a correspondent of yours has alluded to sundry practical exemplifications of the opinion enunciated in the article on the repeal of the union, yet, in sober seriousness, it seems to have inspired the higher classes of literature. The *British and Foreign Quarterly Review*, in an article on the Sicilian vespers, not only justifies the act, but recommends its present use, where I do not think they can show cause. The Sicilian Vespers, our readers will recollect, was a general assassination of the French, by the Sicilians, at a signal given by the tolling of the bells at the hour of prayer. All the French perished, except one man, a governor of a small place, who had behaved mercifully in his office, contrary to the assertion of the Coventry Socialist Lecturer, that the inno-

cent must necessarily suffer as well as the guilty. The following are the words of the reviewer: "Dante, a contemporary, gives, in a few words, the true cause of the rebellion.

"La mala signoria che sempre accora
I popoli soggetti
Mosse Palermo a gridar, mora! mora!"

(Which translates—an evil seignury, that always oppresses a subject people, moved Palermo to cry death! death!)

"The best contemporary accounts record the very words of the poet: 'Death to the French!' was the cry of the people at the Sicilian Vespers. It was not a conspiracy that made the cry universal, but the universal feeling of just hatred and abhorrence of the whole population against their oppressors. Hence, and hence only, like all other rebellions and revolutions from the beginning of the world, the Sicilian Vespers originated. Nations have recourse to these desperate remedies, only when they can bear no longer. Demagogues, oligarchs, military chiefs can, and often do, mislead the people as to the cause of their sufferings, and as to the proper remedies; but no nation ever revolted without just and abundant cause. The case is too common of nations suffering to the very last, without having the requisite energy to free themselves, but there is no instance of an universal discontent degenerating into rebellion, without superabundant cause for it in the iniquity of the government." He says again, "But it will not be superfluous perhaps to give some idea of the system of legal extortions which was invented by the conquerors of Sicily, to break down the spirit of the unfortunate inhabitants. It seems difficult to believe that human wit could devise a system more ruinous or more rapacious." Now the treatment of Ireland by England has always been cited as unique, witnessed to by a host of English themselves, from Dr. Johnson down to Ellice the member for Coventry, and equally by the protestant Irishman Burke as the roman catholic O'Connell. "The most remarkable points of the iniquities" which the reviewer mentions as perpetrated by the French on the Sicilians, are nothing in comparison with those which the Irish have suffered, and do suffer materially, at the hands of the English. But it is the subject matter, the pretence for the oppression of Ireland by England, which makes the case of the Irish more crying than any other. It is the reason given by Sir James Graham for no concession—religion—because you think differently to me, the tyranny over thought, which with every rational creature raised above the brute, and called man, is an aggravation ten thousand times of every other tyranny, and has ever been put upon a par even with physical oppression. Our altars and our hearths, was

the war-cry of the ancients, before the right of private judgment was ever heard of, and whether the way of thinking be goddism, atheism, or socialism, the right of mankind to resist in every manner those of a contrary opinion, who would persecute them, is equally universal. The reviewer continues, "Those who express a *morbid sensibility* at the Sicilian Vespers remind us of those *philanthropists* whose whole feeling of pity is for the murderer, and all their anxiety to spare his life, whilst the sufferings of the family of the victim, and the *infringement of the elementary social principle, security for life, are forgotten*. Well were it for mankind if, whenever bad sovereigns and their satellites attempted to oppress nations, as Charles d'Anjou did Sicily, the people would rise with the same unanimity and determination as the Sicilians did. *If such chastisement were sure to be inflicted, we might depend on seeing better governments, with very little danger of such proofs of national power being required*." Observe, he recommends, not only physical force, but assassination, the private business of every one in a public cause, as it occurred in the case in point, the Sicilian Vespers, "as a means of reforming the world." I do not quarrel with the general recommendation, but certainly do not agree in the individual application he proposes. "In the same country, where Charles d'Anjou authorised the iniquities which we have described, ere the Sicilian Vespers put a stop to his criminal career, one of his acts sanctions a government, which, had he or his myrmidons any reason to suspect another vesper, they would not dare to uphold. Those who have a horror of revolutions ought to ask themselves, whether a people can, by any process, be reduced to a worse condition than theirs who groan under the wicked government of Naples?—whether it be possible for power to be more profligate or more cowardly? And if they honestly feel, as they must feel, that it is beyond possibility, let them ask themselves whether the happiness of several millions of human beings renders it not desirable that a whirlwind should rise strong enough to sweep from the face of the earth such intolerable domination?"

The man must have an esoteric doctrine, and be dealing with symbols—the island of Sicily and the wicked cowardly government of Naples must mean the island of Ireland and its relations with England. The Neapolitans and Sicilians have the same government, religion, and language—the geographical separation is a slight geological rent. The king of both countries is said to be a well-intentioned, if silly, young man, his faults are said to be too great economy, and anxious desire to restore the delapidated

finances of his country—he gives more away in charity and less to the opera—he is rather fond of military show, and does not well understand (his great crime with the English) their principles of political economy. Both countries have some excellent institutions, not to be found in England. Sicily has a small population and a rich territory, and the inhabitants appear to have nothing to do but live upon the produce, which is seen in the immense number of monks and nuns. The king often personally pays them a visit, and is rather too fond, like most absolute potentates of the present day, of encouraging industry by employing his capital, and speculating in its profits himself. But this is really no reason the Sicilians should assassinate all the Neapolitans in their country, and the great evidence that they have not sufficient cause, is, that with their fiery temperament and use of the knife, and a mountainous country to protect them from the consequences, they do not display the same features of crime (as it is called) as in Ireland. When not theorising, without giving proof, but stating facts, we go along with the reviewer: "It was the sense of wrongs and sufferings that drove the Sicilians to despair, and made each of them feel that he had no other resource but to exterminate the wolf from the fold (query, a parson in Ireland) or be his victim—this was the cause of the unanimity and success of the Sicilians—"

"Una salus victis—nullam sperare salutem."

"(Or which reads in English, 'one safety to the conquered to look for no safety.')

The feeling of despair was universal, all classes having equally suffered from the conquerors. Hence, at the first outbreak of the rebellion, the people were unanimous in hunting down the French—soon after, when they had been entirely overpowered, or nearly so, the great families put themselves at the head of the rebellion, and began to direct the energies of the nation with unity of purpose, vigour, and knowledge of the important business they had in hand. The people at first, in their despair, proclaimed a republic."

W.J.B.

(To be continued.)

REVIEW.

Atheism Justified, and Religion Superseded, reasonably, summarily, and conclusively.
By Diagoras Atheos.—Hetherington.

THIS little tract justifies its title, for in the space of eight pages, and for one penny, we have the world's greatest curse despatched, without remorse or preamble. It is of similar size and style with the *Oracle*, and I would recommend the purchasers of the one

to become the purchasers of the other also. The following is a sample of its contents :

Syllogism 1st.

The highest degree of certitude of the reality of an alleged existence is attainable, solely, through the mind's consciousness of a determinate sensation immediately produced by such existence.

The mind has no consciousness of a determinate sensation immediately produced by the existence of a god or supreme being.

Therefore, the highest degree of certitude of the reality of the alleged existence of a god or supreme being is unattainable.

Syllogism 2nd.

The next to the highest degree of certainty concerning an alleged existence is to be derived, solely, from strictly reasonable demonstration.

No strictly reasonable demonstration exists of the alleged existence of a god.

Therefore, we do not possess even the next to the highest degree of certainty concerning the reality of the alleged existence of a god.

Syllogism 3rd.

Less than the greatest degree of certainty must be productive of some degree of doubt.

Concerning the existence of a god we have less than the greatest degree of certainty.

Therefore, concerning the existence of a god we must have some degree of doubt.

Syllogism 4th.

All things possible to be, it is possible for a god to cause to be.

The greatest degree of certainty of the existence of a god, is a thing possible to be.

Therefore, the greatest degree of certainty of the existence of a god, it is possible for a god to cause to be.

Syllogism 5th.

It is the will of god that all thing existent should exist, and that all possible things non-existent should not exist.

Evil, scepticism, unbelief, and irreligion are things existent, and the greatest degree of certainty of the existence of a god is a possible thing non-existent.

Therefore, that evil, scepticism, unbelief, and irreligion should exist, and that the greatest degree of certainty of the existence of a god should not exist, is the will of god.

Syllogism 6th.

God predestined, and caused to be, or created, all things existent.

All evil, crime, misery, doubt, and irreligion are things existent.

Therefore, all evil, crime, misery, doubt, and irreligion, god predestined and caused to be, or created.

Syllogism 7th.

(A creator should be considered responsible for his creatures, and hence)—

God, as the sole and unassisted creator of the universe, should alone be considered responsible for all creatures.

Mankind, together with all the evil, wickedness, doubt, unbelief, and irreligion to which they are subject are creatures.

Therefore, for mankind, together with all the evil, wickedness, doubt, unbelief, and irreligion to which they are subject, god should alone be considered responsible.

CONCLUSION.

From the foregoing syllogisms it is consequent, that all religion is mere folly.

The very existence of its supreme object is not free from a degree of incertitude, immeasurably greater than whatever may attend the question of the reality of the commonest external objects that impress the human sensorium, and, besides, were men ever so sure of the actuality of an omnipotent god, they could not but admit that man's merit or demerit, in relation to such a being, are things utterly beyond his own control, in short, that relatively to a god there can be no such things as merit and demerit.

Man, with the most exalted piety, must exclaim with St. Paul, "By the grace of god I am what I am;" and, as the subject of the greater possible degree of vice and misery, he may as justly say, "By the *reprobation* of god I am what I am."

Is it not the doctrine of the christian scriptures that god hath mercy on whom he will have mercy and whom he will he hardeneth? And why not? for "Hath not the potter power over the clay—of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?" and who shall complain? What son of man shall grumble? "Shall the thing formed say to him who formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"

Paul was evidently a necessitarian, and believed not that man was responsible to god, unless he believed contrary to what he taught.

If a deist or religionist would refute the arguments propounded by the foregoing syllogisms, he must bear in mind that the conclusions can only be avoided by disproving the premises. The propounder cannot evitate the conviction, that if there be a god, that being predestined him to turn from christianity to atheism—aye! even to pen these very lines stating such conviction, "for" as he would especially remind christians, concerning their God, "OF HIM, AND THROUGH HIM, AND BY HIM, ARE ALL THINGS. Amen."

ADDRESSES.—Mr. Southwell, 46, West Register-street, Edinburgh.

Messrs. Robinson, booksellers, Greenside-street, ditto.

Thomas Finlay, Haddington-place, ditto.

T. Paterson, 38, West Register-street, ditto.

TWO MORE ARRESTS

Edinburgh, Aug. 14, 1843.

Two of my volunteer bill-posters were taken up at 1 o'clock on Sunday morning, and I was all night running about for bail—£20 each—which was at last got—their case comes on to day.—The case of bill-posters is deferred till tomorrow. T. P.

SPORTING INTELLIGENCE.

It will be seen, by the copy of a bill which follows, that Paterson is again at liberty, and at work. He never allows the grass to grow under his feet, but makes hay while the sun shines. Paterson is not a scientific fighter—he doesn't wait until "time" is called before he comes to the "scratch," but is no sooner on his feet, after a knock-down blow, than he is at his opponent again, hitting out right and left, and always with telling effect, for he keeps too close to be ever out of distance. In his first encounter with the Scotch god he sported a green flag, this time he has a pink one—his "game" is undoubted, and his honesty unquestionable, so that no parties need fear a "cross," and I trust, under such circumstances he won't want for backers. He was very much out of condition when I last reported—he had a very bad arm, and assured me he could not stand more than five minutes at a time, but he is fast improving, and will shortly, I have no doubt, recover his usual stamina. W. C.

Almost thou persuadest me to be a christian.

Thomas Paterson begs most respectfully to thank the *procurator-fiscal* for the patronage he has so liberally bestowed upon him, and sincerely trusts, by strict attention to business, and keeping constantly on sale at his shop, No. 38, West Register-street, a great variety of first-rate infidel works, to merit a repetition of past favours.

Thomas Paterson begs also to offer the *city police* his hearty thanks for the vigorous manner in which they "stretched the law" against his bill-stickers! His present limited means will not admit of his testifying his gratitude in so substantial a form as they may desire, but all he can, he will do; and if an occasional treat, in the shape of a "blasphemous" pamphlet, will suffice, they may command it at any time.

Thomas Paterson has nothing further to add, except that he has now on sale an excellent stock of books, such as the *procurator-fiscal* delighteth to honour: amongst the rest, "Good Sense," the book of books. (*Much needed by the Edinburgh christians.*) The Bible an Improper Book for Youth, and Dangerous to the Easily-excited Brain; with Immoral and Contradictory Passages therefrom." *Oracle of Reason*. This paper is the open, uncompromising, and fearless advocate of atheism—weekly. *Investigator*. Its aim is to discover truth, to expose error, and to collect materials for a new structure of metaphysical philosophy—weekly. "God versus Pater-

son," the extraordinary Bow-street police report. "Great Dragon Cast Out," a splendid satire on Milton's *Paradise Lost*. "Yahoo," the famous satire on priestcraft, and kingcraft. "Existence of Christ Disproved," by a German Jew. "The Spirit of Bonner in the Disciples of Jesus." "Eternity of the Universe." "Palmer's Principles of Nature." *New Moral World*. "Paley Refuted." Also the works of Mirabaud, Volney, Hume, Paine, Shelley, Dale Owen, Frances Wright, Haslam, Strauss, Carile, and other common sense authors.

NOTICE.

A valuable friend of freedom of expression having presented the Anti-Persecution Union with the remainder of the large edition of Mr. Paterson's trial, entitled "God *versus* Paterson," the committee have resolved on selling them at 6d. each. Every person, therefore, who takes a copy of this extraordinary work will add to the funds of the Anti-Persecution Union.

G. J. H., Sec.

ADDRESS OF THE ANTI-PERSECUTION UNION. II.

THE government has lent its hand to the cause of religious tyranny, and the alternative is unequivocally proposed to you—whether you will rise up in the defence of freedom of expression, or ignominiously lie down as pasture for priestcraft to feed on. The saintly bigot is again prowling on the path of human improvement. Intolerance, the ally of error, the parent of hypocrisy, the sworn foe of justice, liberty, and truth, has now reared its hateful head in the person of the *procurator-fiscal* of the city of Edinburgh. Two reputable booksellers of that place (Messrs. Finlay and Robinson) one grey with years, and the other broken in health, have been dragged from their homes and families—their property seized—and themselves thrown into gaol, for no other crime than that of selling such works as those of Paine and Palmer, Voltaire and Shelley. A short time ago, when England was disgraced with similar prosecutions, Scotland contributed to the support and defence of the victims, and aided to wipe away the national infamy—therefore are you, in common gratitude, bound to return similar assistance. But did not the claims of gratitude present themselves, it would not the less be your duty, to look to this case, indeed, it is every one's true interest to see that no single act of oppression, anywhere, passes unredressed, and uncondemned.

The Anti-Persecution Union will stand no idle spectators of this matter, for they are determined to attempt every legitimate means of establishing the freedom of discus-

sion, and rescuing the victims of religious bigotry. Every earnest effort shall be made, and every proper appeal shall be tried. If infidels remain supine, then shall it go forth that they want generosity, or that they want spirit. If christians do not denounce these proceedings, then shall the infamy of them, while pen or tongue is at our command, be fixed on their principles for ever. Let no man take to himself the selfish consolation that "he has liberty enough," while his brother is the victim of oppression. Let no party flatter themselves that they are secure in the pursuit of their great objects, while freedom of expression is on any pretence forbidden.

Messrs. Finlay and Robinson are imprisoned for the exercise of that right which no man ought ever to relinquish. Let every such act of aggression be the signal for holding public meetings in every town and city in the nation. These prosecutions are undertaken in the name of christianity, therefore let every pulpit be besieged forthwith. If christianity is not to be taxed with disgrace, insist that every minister of the gospel unequivocally denounces the proceedings of the prosecutors. Persecution for opinion has ever been the prime curse of civilised society. If religion, after open, fair, and decided appeals, is found to foster this oppression, the Anti-Persecution Union will propose the question—whether is it better to have religion or liberty? Then shall public opinion be instructed—as Scotland's poet himself would render it—to

*Lay the priest usurper low,
Tyrants fall in every foe,
Liberty's in every blow.*

The government must be made to feel that the unjust imprisonment of Messrs. Finlay and Robinson has proclaimed them public property, the sacred objects of public protection and public support. Already have they been subjected to one trial—to heavy expences—and are now awaiting another trial. Let every man give to these proceedings his hearty execration, and to the victims his pecuniary support—then will injustice be defeated, bigotry will lick the dust, and the right of free discussion will triumph.

G. J. HOLYOAKE, Sec.
40, Holywell-street, August 10, 1843.

P. S. Since writing the preceding, news has been received of the arrest of Mr. Paterson in Edinburgh—also of a man for sticking the bills of the social branch there. Other arrests are about to be made. The public cannot endeavour too earnestly to put a stop to these infamous proceedings.

G. J. H.

Subscriptions received by Mr. Watson, 5,
288

Paul's Alley, Paternoster Row. Mr. Hetherington, 40, Holywell-street, Strand. Mr. Abrahams, Rotunda, 3, Blackfriars Road. Mr. Stewart, 23, John-street, Tottenham Court Road.

SUBSCRIPTIONS,

For the Anti-Persecution Union.

R. R., annual sub. of 1s. per month	£0 13 0
J. M. C., annual sub. of 1s. per month	0 13 0
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W. W.	0 10 0

Per Collector 97.

B. J.	0 2 2
T. M.	0 2 2
R. W. D.	0 2 2

G. J. HOLYOAKE, Sec.

NOTICE.

Received—Final reply to the mistakes of G. J. H., by A Coventry Socialist Lecturer.

J. C. F.—I think not, at least for some time.

It is a common doctrine that to god all things are possible, without any reservation; but beside a thousand other impossibilities, we deny the possibility of god's causing any one thing to be and not to be at the same time; we deny that he can annihilate infinite space or even make it finite; and we defy any rational man honestly to affirm that he can either comprehend or believe the possibility of such things.

"Where then is god's omnipotence? the unsophisticated deist will exclaim. The universe, nay, even the meanest atom therein, is stronger than he! Well, so be it!—*Atheism Justified.*

One Penny.

LIBRARY OF REASON.

This Day is Published,

V. *Natural Theology Exposed.* By George Ensor.

PART I., NOW READY, CONTAINS,
Price Sixpence,

I. Superstition. By Plutarchus. With Preface by Wyttenbach.

II. Liberty and Necessity. By Hume.

III. The Life of Spinoza.

IV. The Supposed Necessity of Deceiving the Vulgar. By J. Hibbert.

V. *Natural Theology Exposed.* By George Ensor.

Printed and Published by WILLIAM CHILTON, No. 40, Holywell-street, Strand, London.
Saturday, August 19, 1843.

ORACLE OF REASON:

Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE."

First Editor—Charles Southwell, imprisoned for twelve months and fined £100, for Blasphemy in No. 4.

Second Editor—George Jacob Holyoake, imprisoned for six months, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.

Third Editor—Thomas Paterson, imprisoned for one month, for Blasphemous Placards, in London.

Vendors—George Adams, imprisoned for one month for selling No. 25, in Cheltenham; and

Harriet Adams, his wife, arrested for selling No. 4, in the same town.

No. 89.]

EDITED BY WILLIAM CHILTON.

[PRICE 1D.]

PHYSICAL FORCE AND MORAL POWER.

III.

MR. GLADSTONE, now one of the cabinet ministers, when in opposition, said the Chinese would be justified in poisoning the English who invaded China. Now he is a state doctor, the recommendation is often thrown in his teeth, and he does not deny this prescription for a country's wrongs. If there be any degrees in assassination, any one kind more "base, cowardly, sneaking, and atrocious," I think our socialist friends will allow this wholesale assassination—equally liable to make away with friend and foe, innocent and guilty—was the worst species. Recommended, too, by a man having a seat in the legislative assembly, and afterwards in the administration—spoken against his countrymen, who were carrying on a war in a distant and most foreign country, according to the prescribed rules of warfare! Having got his celebrity as a quack, when called in as a state physician, he forgot the remedies he had volunteered to people not his patients, and sworn into the possession of his office, which he was to use to the good of the queen's subjects, he forgot that the Irish were labouring under an incurable disease, produced by a long course of similar treatment to what the Chinese temporarily met with at the hands of the English, and, therefore, in the Irish case, this kill-or-cure experiment might have been safely tried on the constitution. Unfortunately, too, the Chinese did not give him the advantage of seeing its effects, they acted more on the advice of the socialists, were knocked down like nine-pins, behaved like sheep worried by dogs, and pushing moral power to an extreme, put an end to themselves instead of their enemies, the English. Perhaps this may have alarmed the sensitive mind of Lord Brougham, or the *Oracle of Reason* may have that effect on the improvement of the public mind, that he seriously apprehended that assassination might be recommended in the House of Commons, and therefore he would not have the liberty of saying it taken away from them. "Lord Brougham—Suppose a person

broaches a treasonable topic in parliament—suppose he recommends assassination of a monarch? Lord Campbell—Why, if my noble and learned friend considers it possible treason can ever be spoken in parliament, I will introduce a word to meet it—but my words are framed so as to exclude 'seditious, blasphemous, or indecent language.' Lord Brougham remarked—Private assassination might, perhaps, be recommended in parliament."—(*Times*, Wednesday, July 19.) We hope we have reported rightly his lordship, if not, we are quite willing he should call to the bar of the House of Lords, the printer of the *Oracle of Reason*—a rather frequent threat with his lordship of late, consequent on the responsibility of printers to show him up. O'Connell, who is not nice in his language, and gives the right names to things, enough to shock a socialist, calls the landlords murderers and assassins, and justifies their assassination by the peasantry. He is reported to have said (*Times*, July 17), "The whole English press, and every man of a civilised mind, condemned the present system of tenure, so productive of reciprocal murders between landlord and tenant (hear, hear)—for the landlord who turned his tenantry from their houses to die in dykes and ditches, was as much a murderer as the tenant who, in the *wild justice of his revenge, assassinated his landlord*. (Hear, hear.) The hundreds of assassinations committed by Irish landlords called to heaven for vengeance, and he now called upon that class of the community to join him in getting rid of a system that was the cause of so much crime, misery, and sorrow, and that covered the land with blood." We are afraid he has taken a leaf out of the *Oracle of Reason*, without doing us the justice of acknowledging the plagiarism. He bears us out in our remarks, that those who commit crimes in the present state of society, must put up with the punishment. The dying cannot wait for the improvement of public opinion, spite of the exertions of the Coventry lecturer to be in before the death.

The half dozen objections of the Coventry Socialist Lecturer, seem to be founded partly on a misinterpretation of what was written. We will take them one by one. First, he

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says, "Because it substitutes individual revenge for public justice." Now, if he means, as it reads, that I recommended every individual to disregard justice, where it existed, and take upon himself the punishment of his own private wrongs, everybody must see that I recommend no such thing. I gave, as an example, the assassination of Archbishop Sharpe, where there was a leaning to the side of mercy, in only selecting one victim—which probably prolonged the struggle, and occasioned a great deal more bloodshed. In the above case, and as I recommended it, it was the very reverse of proposition one—I recommended public justice to make examples of some individual criminals, who have for centuries offended against all the laws of society, and in the face of all the world unblushingly defend and continue their profession of robbery and murder. Even Lynch law, and the wild justice of revenge, have been in more instances right than they have been wrong, which cannot be said so generally in all cases of legal justice. Objection the second seems to be founded on the same misapprehension, that I proposed to every individual idiosyncrasy to judge of a wrong, and take up the sword of justice himself. I am not going to give any opinion upon it, but I will only remark, that this is done in duelling, and though we are all liable to give offence to some, and ready to go out or receive its equivalent in insult or chastisement, yet in calculating the security of life, it is of such rare occurrence, that it can never rationally be taken into consideration. But in its application to the question, I had already considered no man's life to be safe or worth having, in consequence of the grinding injuries of a few over the many—and therefore the many were merely returning the compliment, and reminding the few of the uncertain tenure of their lives, the security of which depended on passive obedience to injustice. As to objection three, I have answered it sufficiently, as far as it applies to me, and taking it in that light, I will merely remark the absolute positiveness of the proposition. It is not put as a question in the text, but two general rules, without exception, are given here, first, that the world has never been made better, secondly but a great deal worse by it. Now duelling leaves it as a matter of chance who is to die, and the innocent may become the victim, and not the guilty, which makes it worse than other physical force, and in that light it has not the redeeming qualities of a justifiable assassination—yet, however present civilisation may abhor the practise, I think few would say the world has never been made better, but a great deal worse by it. Now many people have thought, and think still, that it acts as a salutary check

over the passions of men, and prevents social wrong which, sometimes, worse than crimes, cannot be taken notice of by the law. In that light, it has been canvassed in the late numbers of the *Spectator*, on occasion of the recent fatal duel. Objection four, "Because it deprives man of all the advantages of living in society"—we had security of life, now we hear of property, and as we have said before, if people choose to act systematically against the laws of society, they must take the consequence. The jury of the whole world, every intellectual individual, on opinions founded upon every human consideration, have condemned the proceedings in Ireland—even the present have always found the past guilty—are the robbers and murderers, then, who happen to be in possession, entitled to give a verdict in their own favour, or recommend themselves to their own mercy, instead of submitting to the penalty of their crimes? When insecurity of life and property have deprived man of all the advantages of living in society, and that, too, for the greater number, we say the sooner the lesser are made to feel it the better. Feargus O'Connor very well said the other day, on occasion of the great meeting in Mary-le-bone: "The best speech he had heard up to that time, was the short and pithy one delivered by an Irishman, in answer to the gallant general, when he said that confusion still existed in Ireland. 'So it ought.' (Hear, hear, and loud cheers.)" So I say to the C. S. L. Objection fifth, as far as this refers to me, I gave a graduated sliding scale to the parsons in Ireland. Sixth, "Because man has no right to take away that life he has not the power to give." What! you have no right to kill in self-defence, when attacked by murderers, or waylaid by highwaymen? The conditional killing I recommended. But perhaps you may kill one of the most innocent murderers or highwaymen, in forgetfulness of number five. Of course you may not commit suicide, when tired of life, according to six. Does the Coventry Socialist Lecturer eat butchers' meat, or only imbibe animalculæ, in his water, engulph them in breathing, or press them under foot in walking? Does he practice passive obedience to all the vermin, which, more or less, all human flesh is heir to? This proposition comes from the coinage of religion. And the power principle seems to me an admission of the god-fallacy—who has the power to give life? When he can prove to me a power who can give life, more than the present powers in the arrangement of matter, I shall be inclined to become of his religion. Destruction, as much as creation, is a principle of nature. As to the *argumentum ad hominem* (our precious selves) I will only say, the case in point, that if sceptics are to be subject to the loss of life

and property, on account of their opinions, we shall not be scrupulous in the instruments we use to defend ourselves. I should like to see the goddists begin, we should soon have a strong party in our favour—I have not the least doubt on which side the victory would be, and the sceptics would soon have to interpose in favour of the religious, as in Madrid the other day, where the populace eat a monk. It was only a few years before the French revolution, that an *infidel* was put to death—it roused Europe and Voltaire, and tolled the knell of the priesthood in France, too many of whom, unfortunately, had to expiate their rashness on the scaffold, or were killed like wild beasts, or hunted out of the country. If such were not the consequences, we might wish for the execution of the threats which the C. S. L. holds out. I believe the atheists would act like men—in the case of a fierce persecution, it would be an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, as far as we should not take a slap on one cheek and give the other, lose a coat and give a cloak, forced to walk one mile, offer to go another. Such Tomfoolery may have been recommended, but has never been practised. Certainly, the reputed author of such sayings, never showed their fulfilment in his own person. After having inveighed against all religions, we are not going to adopt as our faith, and practice, the greatest absurdity in the most absurd of all faiths. Such a course of conduct annihilates all justice, as it offers a premium to injustice. Even the brute creation, who, from their want of intelligence, are obliged to submit to this foolishness of christianity, sometimes turn on their persecutors, and, in the wild justice of revenge, either purchase better terms for themselves, or give a salutary warning to others not to offend against the laws of nature. Beyond certain limits they will not always suffer wrong, but will vindicate their right. Had Jesus mounted the foal as it is said, I have no doubt that, instead of resenting the injury, by trying to bear up with him, the animal would have given way, and sent the lord rolling on the ground—or the mother, whom the lord seems to have delighted to vex, from hatred to all others, would have set upon this enemy to her young.

W. J. B.

PANTHEISTIC "REVELATIONS."

BY A BELIEVER.

If the University have taught pantheism, it is that she *believes* it; and if she believes it, she will teach it notwithstanding the clergy of the whole world."—Professor Michelet's address, delivered before the University of Paris, 1843.

HIS mighty saying of the French philosopher, can only be matched by the *prophecy* of Dr. Lichtenberg, professor of the University of Göttingen, and councillor of the court, in the times of George III. It is the following effect: "Fifty years hence, panthe-

ism will dawn upon Europe, as the universal religion." Time is striding on at a giant's pace, and the name of Spinoza and his sublime doctrine, kept in abhorrence only a short time since, is now praised and upheld in such works as the *Westminster Review*, and even by the associate and friend of royalty, Mr. H. Hallam, who, in the last volume of his great work, very nearly proclaims himself a disciple of pantheism.

But our readers may ask us, "What is pantheism?" It is a fact, which may appear strange, yet is nothing but entirely consequential, that whilst pantheism is the doctrine of the *one* and sole *unity*—concealing as it does within itself the universality of ideas (of all ideas), can, at the same time, be reduced to a simple, the simplest formula. Pantheism, being translated from its Greek origin, into any given language, becomes at once intelligible to the most modest understanding. "Pan theism is the doctrine of all-goddedness." Christianity, which, if properly conceived and understood, is but pure pantheism, proclaims the following equally clear and concise formula thereof, "all things are in god." And so they are, they *can* not be otherwise, as he (*it*) is "the only existing"—"the existing"—"the only existence"—"the existence." Pantheism declines even all claim to *originality*—truth, the *only* truth possible, cannot be original (at least not in the usual acceptation of the word). The secret religion of the Egyptian priests *was* pantheism—whilst they did not consider the people capable of comprehending it. In this they were wrong, it is blasphemy to think, that an idea, by which the world alone can be really saved, should not be accessible to the world. Pantheism is entirely *practical*, and although not every one may be capable of fathoming its thorough depths, and of deducting therefrom all its numberless corollaries, yet, every one is able to understand it so far, as to apply it practically.

We have just spoken of Egypt, and it is to that land and its history, that everything relating to our present history and civilisation is finally amenable. Champollion the younger places the erection of the Pyramids *before* any of the present written records. Besides, every one knows that the writing of the ancient Asiatic nations (Hebrew, Chaldaic, Syriac, &c.) is a *literal* one, whilst that of the Egyptians is symbolic and hieroglyphic. As the latter is a lesser development of language than the former, it must be clear to every unbiassed mind, that Egyptian writing (and civilisation) have *preceded* that of the ancient Asiatic nations. Even the syllabic characters of the Chinese are anterior to the Asiatic character, and it is the opinion of Mr. Tradescant Lay (now interpreter to government in China), in his recently published work on China, that the Chinese possess works anterior to even the Hebrew deluge—works which the future may reveal to us. The ideas contained in the sacred Chinese books, are decidedly *pantheistic*, which, with many other glares of ancient history, may have been chiefly instrumental in leading the *modern* French school to that belief they now so fearlessly and unflinchingly profess.

Pantheism is the doctrine of the unity and universality of "the existing"—"existence." It is clear that every *final* and *true* doctrine must necessarily lead to, and unite in—*unity*. Because, as soon as you endeavour to dis sever and divide that which lays (in the shape and expanse of the wide universe) united and "oned" before us, you will; at once, lose yourself in the arbitrariness of fault and error. Thence the dualism of the spiritualists and deists—the still more arbitrary trisism of the "hitherto" christians, in fine, the mythological poly-theism (many-goddedness) of other barbarian nations. But whatever crude and miserable nations have ever been brought before the mass of men, we contend that there existed never a really wise and superior man, who was anything but a pantheist at heart. One of the most striking and least adverted to examples is Goethe the poet, the friend and chancellor of the Grand Duke of Saxe Weimar, who was after taunted by his friends for constantly carrying the works of Spinoza about with him. In mentioning

the latter revered name, we have clearly to state, that Spinoza was *not* the discoverer of pantheism. It is asserted, on the other hand, by some that he derived his ideas from Des Cartes, which is equally untrue. We repeat our belief, that pantheism was the religion of a period, which *antedeceded* our present record, and of which the doctrines of Pythagoras, the Genesis, the boodahism of India, &c. are but subsequent and faint reflexions. But even Roman antiquity poured forth inspirations of pantheism, clearer even than Spinoza ever did, as will appear from the following sublime passage, which is worthy of being inscribed in letters of gold, on the door of every pantheist. It is that with which Pliny prefaces his second book of natural history: "The world (universe), or what has been called by another term, the heavens (god), and by whose expanse every thing else is encompassed, I believe to be a being immense, neither created nor ever to be destroyed. It is needless for man to investigate its wide expanse, nor is it, in fact, within the complex of the human mind. He (it) is *sacred*, eternal, immense, all-in-all, or, rather, the all itself—outward and inward, containing all in himself; either the work of all nature, or, rather, nature itself. It is madness to discuss its expanse in our mind, or to dare to utter it." That single word clearly distinguishes the belief of pantheists from that of atheists. To pantheists *every* thing is *sacred*—to the latter (it would seem) *nothing*.

ADDRESS TO PATERSON.

HAIL Paterson! thou venturous, valorous Scot,
Thou fiend incarnate, god-man, or what-not,
Thou lion heart, thou christians' direst foe—
Was Samson thy progenitor or no?
Or Hercules? whose wond'rous club you wield,
To drive the brazen christians from the field.
Why undertak'st thou the mighty feat,
To hurl corruption from the judgment seat?
To raze at once religion's trading marts,
Founded on concrete blood of human hearts?
Thou mighty monster-man, aim'st thou as well
To cleanse the ill-train'd mind of heaven and hell?
Break through the clouds, and beard the great
"I am?"
Wouldst pluck the holy pigeon—skin the lamb?
Insult the virgin modesty of Mary,
Call cherubs chickens of old Mother Carey?
Wouldst thou in reason's mortar pound the trinity,
And wreck with murderous pestle the divinity?
Or on old Abraham's bosom use thy pestle,
Where rotten Lazarus was wont to nestle?
What manner of man art thou, thou "wiry-nerve,"
Who thus all sacred men and things would serve?
Who laughs at prayer, derides all holy things,
Destroying princes, palaces, and kings?
That is, in busy thought. Thou wouldst o'er turn
Our constitution, make our altars burn,
And temples also—thinking it a joke
To make both church and worship end in smoke.
Well speed thee Paterson, and Southwell too!
May you achieve all you propose to do.
Tho' ravenous wolves beset and hem thee round,
Thy Scottish friends will aid thee—stand thy ground!
Ply well your weapons, smite them hip and thigh,
And England's "Union" stands not idly by.—C.D.

THE SCOTCH GOD WAR.

A SCOTCH CHRISTIAN THIEF.

Now, by Saint Paul, the work goes bravely on.

PATERSON informs me that on Thursday, a young spark of the aristocracy, named Scott Moncrieff, came to his shop, pulled down a placard, spit upon it, and tore it—in imitation of the valiant Knight Bruce, of Holywell-street celebrity. Paterson was fortunately at home—he immediately collared

the fellow, and gave him into custody. The case came on for hearing the same day—Moncrieff had legal assistance, but Paterson pressed the charge, and the magistrates, who seemed rather puzzled, put it off for a week.

THE CASE OF MR. ROBINSON.

No. I of the *Freethinkers' Journal* contained the following passage:

"This is not a time to be hypercritical, when a great principle is at stake, and though there may be some circumstances connected with the proceedings of Robinson not altogether defensible, still there is sufficient merit and justice on his side, to command the sympathy and support of all interested in the right of free publication and discussion."

In reference to this Mr. Robinson says: "I am rather surprised at your penning such a notice respecting my case. I have never for one moment exhibited to public view, in my window or shop, that which might be considered of an immoral tendency; and, further, the procurator-fiscal has not got one single book out of my shop, but what is publicly sold in London and other English towns. The works which are regularly advertised in *Bell's Life*, the *Satirist*, and *London Life*, are the publications which are said to be the obscene publications, taken from my shop. The whole value of these books, with a number of medical works, and all included in the 'immoral list,' do not amount to £5; while the works called 'blasphemy' which have been seized, amount to above a £100. I see you state the total at £50. But this you will perceive is under one half. The seizure of goods was for blasphemy; but the object now is to get up a case of obscenity, so as to turn public opinion in their favour, and to take off the disgraceful charge of persecuting a man for his opinions.

"The charge of obscenity against me is a most diabolical piece of villany, to screen the real question at issue. The real offence has been my publishing the work entitled, 'The Bible not a Proper Book for Youth.' In conclusion, I trust you will do my case justice, and not give the enemy a helping hand."

Although this remonstrance does not apply to any remarks of mine in this paper, I thought it but right to give it publicity, that the strictest justice might be done our persecuted friend.

W. C.

PROSECUTIONS FOR BLASPHEMY.

The following evidence of Dr. John Black, editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, before a select committee of the House of Lords, on the Law of Defamation and Libel, March 1,

1843, is extracted from the report just published:

"What is your opinion with respect to prosecutions for blasphemy?—Practically I should say that prosecutions for blasphemy do no good; they make martyrs, and then they induce a great number of people to look into those things, that never would do it otherwise; for instance, since the abandonment of the prosecutions against Carlile, it will be found that the publications that were sold by Carlile for enormous sums of money—Annet's works, and the work of the Rev. Mr. Palmer, and so on—are now to be seen on every stall, offered for sixpence or a shilling, which you would have paid enormous sums of money for before.

"Do you conceive that there is any difficulty in obtaining a verdict from a jury; that there would be any doubt about the success of a prosecution instituted against a blasphemous publication?—I am not so sure of that. The majority of the jury would, in all cases, be disposed to convict; but we know very well that one man may prevent your obtaining a verdict, and it would be very difficult to get a jury, either in London or in any of the great towns, in which there would not be one man inclined to defend the publication.

"Are you aware that any prosecution for blasphemy ever failed?—Hone was prosecuted for blasphemy; but that was a very peculiar case. I am not sure that some of the prosecutions for blasphemy by the society called the Bridge-street Gang did not fail.

"Was it not in consequence of their prosecuting the Rev. Robert Taylor, that he came and defended himself, and produced very unpleasant effects, by reading, in the course of his defence, a great body of blasphemous publications?—I believe so. I have not attended particularly to the case. I believe that the effect both of his trial and of the trial of Carlile, who read in the course of his trial the Age of Reason, was to disseminate those things very much more, because, in the publication of the report of the trial, those works were inserted, and many of the libels of Mr. Taylor were exceedingly offensive. He contrived to live well; he was well clothed and well fed. It seems to me that in some of the late prosecutions for very offensive libels in Holywell-street, in the Strand, a course has been sanctioned by some of the magistrates that might lead to very serious consequences. A man takes great offence at seeing a placard in the window, and goes and seizes upon this placard. It happened that there was a boy in the shop at the time; but if some sturdy individuals had been in the shop they would have knocked him down. There was the case of

a man well known to the late Mr. Sheridan, and to the late Lord Moira, Felix M'Carthy, who was employed as the responsible editor for a newspaper set up in London for the express purpose of libelling; I think it was the *Argus*. He was a powerful man, about seven feet high; people used to call him the Duke of St. Giles's; he could at any time bring down some 1,000 people from St. Giles's—he was commonly said to be the head of the clan M'Carthy. This man got about three guineas and half a week for being the responsible editor of this paper; and when anybody came in with a horsewhip to ask for the editor, he rose up and said, 'I am,' and the party bolted out as quickly as possible. Suppose this man in Holywell-street had had a strong man of that sort in his shop, it would have led to very serious consequences."

THE NEWCASTLE SOCIETY FOR THE OVERTHROW OF SUPERSTITION.

THIS excellent society, for the suppression of religious vice, has lately presented another report to the public. In a report of this report, which appears in the *New Moral World* of July 1, there is a passage which requires a notice in the *Oracle*. It is this: "The Overthrow of Superstition Society did not support the Anti-Persecution Union, in consequence of the attacks of its organ upon the socialists and the late Mr. R. Carlile." It is necessary to show that this determination on the part of the society, was not well-grounded, because, if it is fair in any party to withhold support from the Anti-Persecution Union for having made the *Oracle* its organ—the union must soon become inoperative for want of funds. It must be understood that the Anti-Persecution Union had no controul over, and, as a union, had no sympathy with, the sentiments of the *Oracle*. Its path is neutrality—it is neither associated, nor disassociated, with the views of any party. It never put forward a single opinion concerning the socialists or Mr. Carlile, but it would have protected these parties in the publication of their opinions, had those in high places attacked them. The union made the *Oracle* its organ, because it was necessary to have an organ of some kind, and because no other paper would become its organ. The union would gladly have used the *New Moral World* or the *Times* newspaper as its organ, but the first paper was no more open to them than the last. Is it reasonable then to have refused to support the Anti-Persecution Union for using the *Oracle of Reason* for its organ, when it could have no other? If, indeed, the union had possessed the choice of any other paper, it is no just ground for refusing support to it, that

the *Oracle* had attacked the supposed errors of the socialists and Mr. Carlile. I will state a case. The Overthrow of Superstition Society lately made a present to the residents of Harmony, and the society supports that party—all of which is very proper, but it is well known that Mr. Owen would joyfully make the *Times* newspaper his organ to-morrow, had he the power. But the *Times* has often “attacked the socialists and the late Mr. Carlile,” with very different intentions from the *Oracle*. Now I put it to the society of Newcastle, would they think of refusing to support New Harmony, because the *Times* was the harmonists’ organ? Certainly not. Then upon what ground do they refuse support to the Anti-Persecution Union, because its organ had attacked the socialists and Mr. Carlile? The socialist party would not be identified with the toryism of the “thunderer,” nor is the Anti-Persecution Union identified with the antagonism of the *Oracle*. The excellent objects of the harmonists ought not to be neglected, because they were set forth on the pages of a tory paper, and, for like reasons, the Anti-Persecution Union ought not to be deserted, because its appeals for support were made in an atheistical advocate.

The sole intention of this notice is setting the Anti-Persecution Union right with the public, upon the particular point which the Newcastle society calls in question. But to this society it is due to add, that its own scruples did not interfere with its generosity. It still supported the objects of the union’s protection. “At various times upwards of £5 were forwarded for the support of Mr. Holyoake, in Gloucester Gaol, and 12s. were sent to the widow of the late Mr. Holberry, the chartist, because of the kind behaviour of the Cheltenham chartists to Mr. Holyoake.” This single act is above all praise. The history of modern parties does not present a more delicate, or more gratifying trait of benevolence, than this. G. J. H.

REPEAL BY ASSASSINATION.

It is very amusing, at times, to observe what a vast amount of trouble men will take, and time waste, which might be much more usefully employed, if they would not be in too great a hurry to be doing something, quite regardless of what that something might be. There are some men, for instance, regular attendants upon public meetings, who consider they are wanting in their duty to their fellows, if they do not speak upon every occasion—others, again, having a taste for literature, never meet with a disputed question but they attempt something upon the subject. In both cases the result is generally words, words, words—no one being a wit the wiser for the display.

The article of Diagoras Atheos upon “Assassination,” would certainly have induced me to conclude that he belonged to one of the two classes I have named, but for the infrequency of his appearance before the public. I have seldom met with “so tame and impotent a conclusion,” from the pen of one whom I have reason to believe is possessed of extensive general information, and has the advantage of a superior education. Diagoras Atheos favours us with his antipathies—talks of “the meanness, cowardice, and dishonesty,” of myself and W. J. B., congratulates himself and “The true friends of freedom, that W. J. B.’s short-sighted advice is not likely to be followed”—thinks that “The common sense of all righteous and enlightened men will reject such a proposal, as unworthy of the moral dignity which should be inseparable from their characters”—and says, he could expatiate upon the “More noble and moral means, the sublime philosophy of pure atheism must and will adopt,” to rid the world of its evils. All this is very grand, but something more homely and more to the purpose would have been better. When an individual calls the attention of the public to a disputed subject, it is only reasonable to expect that he shall keep to the question as originally laid down, and not enter into a desultory discussion of a general principle, which had not previously been mooted. Also, when he attacks other writers or speakers, he ought to condescend, however slightly, to notice their arguments, before uttering a wholesale condemnation of them, which may be very useful to him, but very unfair to them. Neither of these particulars has Diagoras Atheos observed, and for proof of my assertion, I refer my readers to the articles of W. J. B. and myself—no further defence is necessary.

Diagoras says, he should avoid such men as myself and W. J. B., as he “would a hissing serpent, or any other noxious reptile,” and gives us a “new commandment,” “Do unto yourself as you would do unto others.” Would Diagoras avoid himself, because of his opinions, as he would me and W. J. B., because of ours? For the satisfaction of Diagoras, who might not know the whereabouts of myself and W. J. B., I may state, that we are many miles removed from him, and that he need not be under the slightest apprehension that either of us shall seek his life, “from behind a hedge or through a window,” because we differ from him. In fact, if men may speak well of themselves, without egotism, I may say, that we are generally considered, where known, to be harmless, good-natured fellows, more prone to laugh than frown, and ever anxious to produce pleasure and dispel pain—but having the happiness of the greatest number at heart, we do not hesitate to recommend such

measures as our reason and experience dictate would produce it, regardless of petty prejudices, *arising from favourable positions*, or bombastic notions of states of society which have never yet been realized.

The gratuitous assumption, in opposition to facts, that W. J. B. and myself are defending what we believe to be false, "from a mere spirit of combativeness," may be answered by the counter assumption, in harmony with facts, that Diagoras Atheos wrote for writing sake.

The "argumentum ad hominem" shall be "answered to the point"—I shouldn't like to hear of a project for *my* assassination. What has this to do with the arguments of myself and W. J. B.? Again, if petty larceny would produce the good sought for by assassination—I would prefer it. I am no lover of bloodshed—but I would kill the man who sought my life, or that by which I lived, if I had the power—*comprenez vous*, Diagoras?

I would advise Diagoras Atheos to read the invaluable historical facts adduced by W. J. B., read the speeches in parliament, the letter of S. Crawford, the harangues of D. O'Connell, and again read my article—let him well consider the subject, and if he is still opposed to our opinions, let him show reasons better than our reasons, and not talk of *compassionating* W. J. B. and myself, for wishing the death of our enemies, when our *wish* is to save their lives, if it can be done without the sacrifice of numberless other lives. If Diagoras Atheos will take his head out of the clouds, descend from his stilts, and condescend to look at the world *as it is*, and not as he would *wish* it to be, he may come to a different conclusion to the one he entertains at present. W. C.

REVIEW.

Paley Refuted in his own words. By G. J. Holyoake.—Hetherington.

OF all refutations of Paley, and of the grand fallacy of natural theology, namely, the argument from analogy for the existence of one god, this is the most perfect and satisfactory, whilst, at the same time, it is the most unpretending. The author puts forward no claims to originality, further than in the *mode* of treating the question, which is certainly unique, and beyond all cavil. Mr. Holyoake demonstrates, from Paley's premises, not the existence of one god only, but the existence of an infinite number. This is a conclusion which will be by no means congenial to theologasters, and they have no way of escape from such a ridiculous conclusion, but by embracing atheism. They are, by this pamphlet, placed between the horns of a dilemma, and we will now kindly permit them to choose upon which horn they will

be transfixed. The author, in his introduction, thus explains his object:

Foremost among those things supposed to be satisfactory concerning deity, stands Dr. Paley's treatise. The argument of design is unquestionably the most popular ever developed, and the most seductive ever displayed. It has the rare merit of making the existence of god, which is the most subtle of all problems, appear a mere truism—and the proofs of such existence, which have puzzled "the wisest of human heads," seem self-evident. It has given dogmatical confidence to the learned, and encouraged insolence in the ignorant. To aid in counteracting this influence, this essay is sent forth. In its pages the popular bearing of Paley's reasoning is employed for its own destruction, and the veil which artfully concealed its weakness is torn away. From a love of fairness, Paley is permitted to state his own case, and from sheer politeness, he is allowed to refute his own arguments. Out of his own mouth proceeds, and in his own words appear, his confutation. For of all replies to Paley, none seem so satisfactory, so complete, and so conclusive, as Paley's reply to himself.

The author contends, that "If, in the investigation of this question, it be legitimate to employ analogy in one part, it must be legitimate to employ it in like respects in another." It must be premised, that Paley contends for a *personality* as his deity, but, at the same time, says he is without *body, parts, and passions*. To this the author objects:

Is deity's existence to be weighed out to us in the scales of analogy, and all other particulars belonging to such existence, to be received on the very veracious authority of *maybes, imagination, and conjecture*? To borrow an illustration from common life—if a man should buy tin of a metal-dealer, he would not consent to have one portion weighed in avoirdupois, and another in troy, scales. For the same reason, when I buy theological wares of a deity-dealer, I will not consent to have deity's existence weighed to me in the scales of analogy, and deities attributes weighed in the scales of faith and supposition. He would be a sorry merchant who should suffer a trader to weigh him one quantity of an article and guess him another, and agree to pay whatever the trader might find it his interest to guess the value at. An honest buyer would neither wish to cheat, nor be cheated himself, and would therefore say: "Please to put this quantity in the scales, as you did the other, that I may learn its fair value, in the usual way." So I say to Paley, "As you weighed design, designer, and personality, in the scales of analogy and experience, do, my dear doctor, be good enough also to weigh *organisation* and other particulars there."

And he proceeds forthwith to prove the *organisation* of Paley's deity, and the necessity of his having had a designer, equally with the man whom Paley insists his deity designed.

Not only are the arguments clear and indisputable, but the author has managed a rather difficult subject with great dexterity, and without tautology. W. C.

One of the books lately prosecuted by the procurator-fiscal of Edinburgh, is "The Bible dangerous to the easily-excited brain." The following is just advertised in all the newspapers: "Essays on partial derangement of the Mind, in supposed connection with Religion. By the late J. Cheyne, M.D."

The indictments of Finlay and Robinson, state the prosecutions to be in agreement with the "laws of this and every other well-governed realm." We advise the ambassadors of all the powers who have no laws against blasphemy, France, Belgium, Prussia, Bavaria, Holland, &c., to remonstrate against this purely gratuitous insult on the countries they represent.

One of the prize cartoons is Joseph of Arimathea, converting the Britons to christianity—just like the English, who must needs have a just and honourable counsellor, and, moreover, a *rich* man, to preach the gospel to the people of a country distinguished for their love of titles and of mammon—a vulgar fisherman they could not stomach, so they invented this legend of Joseph, who might figure amongst the fashionable arrivals in the *Post*, at Mivart's, from the east, the illustrious disciple who buried his master. We hear he is invited down to Windsor, and will lay before her majesty his new views of heaven. As his stay will be short, we recommend the nobility and gentry early to attend his levees. He lives in an eastern style of magnificence—oriental delicacies, and European luxuries indulge the taste of those who are selected to sit at table and hear the wisdom that drops from the lips of our distinguished visitor and philanthropist.

BOZ UPON PROVIDENCE.—"It would sadly pinch and cramp me, my dear friend," repeated Mr. Pecksniff, "but providence—perhaps I may be permitted to say, a special providence—has blessed my endeavours, and I could guarantee to make the sacrifice." A question of philosophy arises here, whether Mr. Pecksniff had or had not good reason to say, that he was specially patronised and encouraged in his undertakings. All his life long he had been walking up and down the narrow ways and bye places, with a hook in one hand and a crook in the other, scraping all sorts of valuable odds and ends into his pouch. Now, there being a special providence in the fall of a sparrow, it follows (so Mr. Pecksniff might have reasoned, perhaps), that there must also be a special providence in the alighting of the stone, or stick, or other substance which is aimed at the sparrow. And Mr. Pecksniff's hook, or crook, having invariably knocked the sparrow on the head and brought him down, that gentleman may have been led to consider himself as specially licensed to bag sparrows, and as being specially seised and possessed of all the birds he had got together. That many undertakings, national as well as individual—but especially the former—are held to be specially brought to a glorious and successful issue, which never could be so regarded on any other process of reasoning, must be clear to all men. Therefore the precedents would

seem to show that Mr. Pecksniff had good argument for what he said, and might be permitted to say it, and did not say it presumptuously, vainly, or arrogantly, but in a spirit of high faith and great wisdom meriting all praise.—*Martin Chuzzlewit.*

THE BENEFIT OF READING THE BIBLE.—Protestantism places the bible in the hands of the people, and thus enables them to judge for themselves. According to a Welch magistrate, in his address to the people, who are devout bible readers, the following is the passage of scripture, which, by the special providence of god, appoints Rebecca as their leader, and commands them to destroy turnpike gates. Genesis, chap. xxiv. ver. 60, "And they blessed Rebecca, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the *gate* of those which hate them."

NOTICE.

The edition of Mr. Paterson's Trial having been presented to the Anti-Persecution Union, they are now to be sold at SIXPENCE each, for the benefit of the funds of the victims of religious persecution. This extraordinary book was published at 1s.

Mr. Paterson begs to acknowledge the receipt of 5s. from W. J., who congratulates him on his liberty.

SUBSCRIPTIONS,

For the Anti-Persecution Union.

M. G.	..	..	..	..	..	£0	2	0
John Haxton	..	..	..	..	..	0	5	0
John Jesson	..	..	..	..	..	0	0	6
Frederic Makensie	..	..	..	..	..	0	0	6
James Taylor	..	..	..	..	..	0	0	6
J. Wheelhouse	..	..	..	..	..	0	1	6

G. J. HOLYOAKE, Sec.

The third Address of the Anti-Persecution Union is prevented appearing this week, through the illness of the secretary.

One Penny.

LIBRARY OF REASON.

This Day is Published,

V. *Natural Theology Exposed.* By George Ensor.

PART I., NOW READY, CONTAINS,

Price Sixpence,

- I. Superstition. By Plutarchus. With Preface by Wyttenbach.
- II. Liberty and Necessity. By Hume.
- III. The Life of Spinoza.
- IV. The Supposed Necessity of Deceiving the Vulgar. By J. Hibbert.
- V. Natural Theology Exposed. By George Ensor.

Printed and Published by WILLIAM CHILTON, No. 40, Holywell-street, Strand, London.
Saturday, August 26, 1843.

THE ORACLE OF REASON:

Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE."

First Editor—Charles Southwell, imprisoned for twelve months and fined £100, for Blasphemy in No. 4.
Second Editor—George Jacob Holyoake, imprisoned for six months, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.
Third Editor—Thomas Paterson, imprisoned for one month, for Blasphemous Placards, in London.
Vendors—George Adams, imprisoned for one month for selling No. 25, in Cheltenham; and Harriet Adams, his wife, arrested for selling No. 4, in the same town.

No. 90.]

EDITED BY WILLIAM CHILTON.

[PRICE 1D.]

THE LEWDNESS, IMPURITY, GROSSNESS, AND OBSCENITY OF THE SCOTCH GOD.

One day, when our friend General Withers heard these prophecies (Ezekiel) read to him, he asked *in what brothel the holy scriptures had been written?*—*Voltaire.*

Now, 'tis evident from the sacred scriptures, that Sarah, Abraham's wife, *was his sister*, by the father, tho' not by the mother: "And yet indeed she is my sister, she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother, *and she became my wife.*" Here was at least a half-blood, and something with a face very like *incest*, and yet the marriage (was) *justified by god himself.*—*Oracles of Reason, by Charles Blount.*

Then what chaste discourses
Of ladies, who, for sweethearts, talk of horses!
Oh shame, where is thy blush? Here's godly reading,
To teach young girls at boarding-school good breeding!.....

A prophet, next, comes tramping thro' the streets,
Bare-buttock'd, telling all the girls he meets
That he had been with child, and brought forth wind,
Which sounded like a harp (perhaps behind);
And that if ladies rigg'd themselves so fine,
And put rings in their snouts, like filthy swine,
The lord would smite 'em all with scabby nobbs,
And (what's more shocking) *show their thingumbobs.*
Such is the christian Yahoo's holy treasure,
Which yields knaves profit and gives idiots pleasure!
Since *holy-bible* reading is the taste,
No wonder all our females are so chaste!
Can ribaldry like this be edifying?
So full of smiting, *smuttiness*, and lying?—*Yahoo.*

In Robinson's indictment, I find the following: "Albeit, by the laws of this and of every other well-governed realm, the wickedly and feloniously publishing, vending, or circulating, or causing to be published, vended, or circulated, or exposed for sale, any profane, impious, or blasphemous book, or printed work, or any book or printed work, containing a denial of the truth and authority of the holy scriptures, or of the christian religion; as, also, the wickedly and feloniously publishing, vending, or circulating, or causing to be published, vended, or circulated, or exposing for sale, any lewd, impure, gross, or obscene book, or printed work, or print, engraving, or representation, *devised, contrived, and intended* to vitiate and corrupt the morals of the lieges, and to raise and create

in their minds *inordinate and lustful desires*, are crimes of a *heinous* nature, and *severely punishable*, yet true it is and of verity, that you the said Henry Robinson are guilty of the said crimes," &c.

Now, in the first place, it is a *lie* to say, that by the laws of "every other well-governed realm," men are punished for what is called blasphemy—for, as shown in the *Oracle*, No. 81, there are many places in which there are no laws of the sort, and they are quite as well governed as Scotland or England—if not better. Again, there is no wickedness in publishing, vending, or circulating impious books—for blasphemy and impiety are words without meanings—men can neither blaspheme god, if there be one, or write impious books. Next, it is charged that "Publishing, vending, or circulating, or causing to be published, vended, or circulated, or exposing for sale, any *lewd, impure, gross, or obscene book*, or printed work, or print, engraving, or representation, *devised, contrived, and intended* to *vitiate and corrupt the morals* of the lieges, and to *raise and create* in their minds *inordinate and lustful desires*, are crimes of an heinous nature, and severely punishable." Well, granting such conduct to be a crime of a heinous nature, are not all the societies for the distribution of the bible, at home and in foreign parts, justly chargeable with such crime? Will any christian dispute the tendency of the bible to create in the minds of its readers "inordinate and lustful desires?" Is it not easy of proof that the bible is a "lewd, impure, gross, and obscene book?" And are not all who are engaged in its dissemination guilty of "wickedly and feloniously publishing, vending, or circulating" a "lewd, impure, gross, and obscene book?" and that far more so than Mr. Robinson—for every christian professes to read the bible, and to be aware of its contents, whereas Mr. R. merely procured the works indicted for his christian customers, and most probably never read a page of them. The Right Hon. R. L. Shiel, said, in his place in parliament: "Many passages in scripture were written with such force, and, he might say, with such *nakedness of diction*, as rendered them *unfit*

THE ORACLE OF REASON.

for indiscriminate perusal. There were parts of the old testament in which images of *voluptuousness* were presented to the mind, *on which the imagination of a youthful female ought not to be permitted to repose.* He would venture to assert that the Odes of Anacreon did not display more luxury of imagination, or combine more *sensual* associations, than parts of the old testament." But not only are episcopal and presbyterian christians guilty of the heinous crime charged, but they are also guilty of a far worse, namely, that of practising the grossest deception and the vilest hypocrisy, cunning, and treachery, in furtherance of their beastly design—for they declare *the bible* to be a purely *moral* book, whilst they *know* that its pages are crowded with lewdness, impurity, grossness, and obscenity—they impress upon the budding maiden and the tender youth the absolute and indispensable necessity of their reading every word and practising every precept, although Mr. Shiel asks, in reference to *the bible*, "Should a woman be permitted to read in her chamber what she would tremble to hear at her domestic board? Should she con over and revolve, *what she would rather die than utter?*" Episcopalian, presbyterian, catholic, and other christians declare that *the bible* was written by the god of the universe, whose every action is pure and holy—and the result of such teaching, as may be expected, is whoredom and adultery, robbery and murder, villany in every shape and form, from one end to the other of every christian land.

I do not blame christians for this—not I—were I a christian, I should say with them, "*To the devil with morality!*" If David was saved, why not I?—if incestuous Lot and his daughters were not damned, why should I be?—if Abraham was honoured above all other men, notwithstanding his villanies, why might not I luxuriate eternally, and receive minor villains into my bosom, when their earthly course was run?" A god of justice would surely not damn me for similar acts to those committed by men *after his own heart*, and by his chosen people—the contrary supposition would be an insult to him, *and I would not believe it.*

When christians rob—when christians murder—when christians persecute—when christians debauch, they are perfectly consistent—they "Do those things which they *ought* to do (as christians), and leave undone those things which they *ought not* to do (as christians)." Let it never be forgotten, that though these practices are essentially christian, they are as essentially immoral. Such conduct may do very well, and be indispensably necessary, to prepare men for a residence with father, son, and holy-ghost—but they never will qualify men for living happily in this world—they never will make men

amiable, virtuous, and intelligent. Morality and christianity are infinitely dissevered. Morality is white as the drifted snow, and bright as the noon-tide blaze—christianity is black as the blackest ebony, and gloomy as the grave.

The lord's advocate for Scotland declares that certain books, written by christians and patronised by christians, are "lewd, impure, gross, or obscene," and are "Devised, contrived, and intended to vitiate and corrupt the morals of the lieges (of her majesty, which said lieges are god's creatures), and to raise and create in their minds *inordinate and lustful desires* (of which fact the lord's advocate is evidence, in his own person—for the reading of the said books, with a view to ascertain their contents, and found an indictment thereon, created in the lord's advocate *inordinate and lustful desires*)." Now *the bible* of the Jews and christians is of the nature described, to wit, "lewd, impure, gross, and obscene," and *the bible* was written by

THE GOD OF THE CHRISTIANS,
ergo,
the author, deviser, and contriver of *the bible*

IS A LEWD, IMPURE,
GROSS, AND OBSCENE PERSON,

who wickedly and feloniously, devised, contrived, and intended to vitiate and corrupt the morals of mankind, and to raise and create in their minds inordinate and lustful desires, by writing the said lewd, impure, gross, and obscene book, which conduct is a crime of an heinous nature, and severely punishable. I would, therefore, submit to the lord's advocate the propriety of forthwith *indicting his client*, making the following alteration in the preamble of the indictment: "*Yet true it is and of verity*, that you the said god, *alias* the lord god, *alias* I am that I am, *alias* Jehovah, *alias* the word, *alias* the spirit, *alias* the father, *alias* the son, *alias* the holy-ghost, *alias* the father, son, and holy-ghost, are guilty of the said crimes." I would further submit, with all modesty, that when this notorious criminal is found guilty, as assuredly he would be, by an impartial jury, that his name should be held accursed from that time forward, "for ever and ever, world without end."

THE SCOTCH CRUSADE.

Two more Committals.

VERILY this is an age of great men, le grumblers and cynics say what they may For instance, there is magistrate Wood, of Bristol, high-priest of methodism, who committed Charles Southwell—Messrs. Cappe and Overbury, of Cheltenham, who committed George Jacob Holyoake, and George Adams, and arrested Mrs. Harriet Adams

and child—Messrs. Jardine and Hall, of Bow-street, London, who imprisoned Paterson—and last, though not the least, the procurator-fiscal of Edinburgh, who arrested Robinson, Finlay, Paterson, and three or four others. Least! did I say? Why the procurator is a host in himself—a regiment of such men would infidelise the world. One of the worthies I have named would be sufficient for an age—but here we have them all existing contemporaneously. The procurator bids fair to rival Samson—their weapons being identical. He must be careful that in his dalliance with his Delilah (the Scotch kirk) he be not shorn of his strength by the harlot, and betrayed into the hands of the Philistines (the infidels), for there is little chance at his death (his political death, I mean) of his being able to wreak his vengeance upon his enemies, as Samson did. He may *Scotch* the snake, he *cannot* kill it.

Of all the brave men in the battle of the Jew-god, of late years, the procurator is by far the bravest, and as “none but the brave deserve the fair,” I trust he may be blest with the fairest specimen of the *christian* feminine gender which the queen of the north can produce, if he be not already wed. Paterson would, I have no doubt, “for a trifling consideration,” write an epithalamium, or nuptial song, on the happy occasion of his patron’s marriage, and I will promise to give it publicity in the *Oracle*—an honour which his fiscalship will rightly value, I have no question, for it is a mark of esteem I would not bestow upon every one engaged in the “holy” war.

Of all crimes in the calendar, the most extraordinary, from its protean-like qualities, is that of blasphemy—you can fix it nohow—it never wears the same face twice, and the only test you have of its identity is the penalty which, in this christian country, invariably attaches to its commission. No. 88 contained the copy of a placard, issued by Paterson immediately upon his release from custody—it commenced, “almost thou persuadest me to be a christian.” For posting this bill, two young men, Messrs. Hamilton and Saunderson—making *five* for similar offences—have been brought before the sheriff, who is, I presume, the tool of the procurator, but certainly a very Solon (goose). The placard ironically thanks the procurator for his patronage, but has no further allusion to holy things, than that conveyed in the text quoted, yet the Sawney Sheriff declared that it was “undoubtedly blasphemous,” and the posting thereof a monstrous nuisance—and he sentenced the defendants to 30 days’ imprisonment, or to find security in £10 each to keep the peace for twelve months. The Edinburgh god-protectors will earn an addition to their shield, of a Bottom’s head upon a bible, if they continue thus valiantly to battle with

the infidel dogs. “No man provokes me without danger,” is the christian motto of the god-defending city, and our friends have had ample evidence of its truth—but, with the Orsini of Rome, I would have them “beware our embrace,” for we will hug them as bear never hugged before, until we have deprived them of the power of doing mischief.

A few days since, Paterson issued a bill headed “Holy Bible,” containing the following passages, *without comment*: Ezekiel xxiii. 6-8, iv. 12-14—Song of Sol. vii. 1—Isai. iii. 17, et seq.—Gen. ix. 21—Deut. xxiii. 1, 13—Malachi ii. 3—Lev. xv. 18—Num. xxxi. 17-18. I am curious to know whether the fanatics will declare these passages to be *obscene*, by indicting the publication. All that Paterson wants is the *sinews of war*—if he is supplied, only moderately supplied, with these, he will infallibly gain the day. With indomitable courage, and a ready address, to turn every trifle to advantage, if he fails, *it will be for a lack of support*. He has not, I believe, wanted as yet—*let him not want* the needful for carrying on the war. Remember! those who have the means to help, and withhold it, *aid the enemy*.—W.C.

THE SCOTCH CHRISTIAN THIEF, AND WHAT BEFEL HIM.

MY DEAR C.—It may be interesting to you to know that the aristocrat’s case came on yesterday (Thursday, Aug. 24), when the decision was, that he must find security to keep the peace for twelve months. Thus have we blown to the winds that cherished idea of christians, that they might, with impunity, destroy the property or break the bones of all who dare to expose the obscenity of their brutalising Jew-book, so essential to the emancipation of the millions. Fortunately knowledge is progressing, and is putting a stop to the murderous proceedings of priestly knaves or quixotic sparks, subject to fits of righteous madness. Everything here conspires to confirm me, did I require it, that religion tends to contract the feelings of humanity, and to stupify the mind. The Scotch are very religious, are great church-goers, and have a wondrous amount of faith. Expose their darling fables, and their *morality* is discoverable in threats to burn the place, and in their abuse of the wretch who dares say white is white—in fact, religion in Scotland, as elsewhere, is only a delirious attachment to principles founded on ignorance and maintained in bigotry. Papers and priests here are endeavouring to keep the minds of Edinburgh’s citizens in eternal infancy, by calling me all sorts of hard names, to prevent them reading my placards, but I have put forth the accompanying hand-bill, which will go far to shake the sandy foundations of christianity, or set men thinking—which with me is much the same.

For my own part, I have no notion of holding my license to print, publish, or sell whatever I consider profitable to myself and fellow-slaves, at the toleration of any bigots in authority or otherwise—and, further, I believe that my only safety consists in resisting oppression in every shape, with perseverance and determination. This is a duty incumbent on all, at the present moment, and, if well effected, the liberty of speech might be gained. Should reformers fall back, now that the victory is almost gained, then, as M.Q.R. says, in his last paragraph in No. 70, “While the ruling few can, through the enormities of an atrocious god-based system, cozen or force one portion of our hand-workers to sweat, toil, and starve, to fill the state coffers, for the bribery of another portion of the hand-workers to shoulder the musket, to uplift the bludgeon, to turn the dungeon key on their friends, their helpers, their liberators—while they can induce the shrewd, the crafty, the clever, to sell the glorious powers of speech and of the press for pay, pension, or office—*so long may a baneful oligarchy impede the progress of healthy action, and continue to feed, parasite-like, on the vitals of the community.*” T.P.

FAVORABLE NOTICES OF “THE MAN.”

INFIDEL PUBLICATIONS.—The man Paterson, who, of late, has made himself notorious by his blasphemous placards, still continues to ply his unhallowed calling, in the face of the law. The very day on which the two lads referred to in our last were convicted, another person was apprehended posting bills of the same blasphemous character. He was brought before Bailie Richardson, on Wednesday morning, and having expressed his regret that he had been engaged in such a disreputable employment, he was simply convicted of the offence, and dismissed with an admonition. We are sorry to add, that notwithstanding the lenient manner in which he had been treated, he was similarly employed in two hours after he had obtained his liberty. On Thursday last Mr. Scott Moncrieff was placed at the bar before Sheriff Tait, for having wantonly and maliciously destroyed a blasphemous card, which had been attached to Paterson's shop door. The circumstances of the case were these:—The young man in passing the shop, observed a card conspicuously displayed, in which all the evils of the world and sufferings of mankind were directly imputed to almighty god. The young gentleman considering that his feelings, as well as those of every right-principled person, were grossly insulted, *with a spirit which we admire*, tore it from its place and dashed it upon the street. The father of the young gentleman, the agent of the Duke of Buccleuch, pleaded in extenuation of the

offence, that the exposure of such a placard, even though attached to the premises of the complainer, was a violation of the laws of the country, and read an extract from the work of Hume, which confirmed this statement. The sheriff admitted that the exhibition of anything blasphemous or profane was illegal, but the question at issue was, whether any one but an officer of the law was entitled to interfere? He was of opinion, that however offensive the placard may have been, it was the property of the complainer, and private rights must be protected. Mr. Moncrieff had acted *injudiciously* in attempting to enforce the law himself, and he must therefore order him to find caution for his future good behaviour in the sum of £10, or go ten days to prison. Admitting the justice of this sentence, we are inclined to ask if the public is to receive no protection? Is Paterson to be allowed, either at his shop door, or in his windows, to exhibit his atheistical and profane placards, without molestation? True, the law has been enforced against posting them on the public streets, but is incompetent to suppress them altogether. *We express a hope that the authorities will be on the alert, and use every effort to put down an evil which is so offensive to the community.*—*The Witness.*

BLASPHEMOUS PUBLICATIONS.—The wretched man Paterson continues to obtrude, with hideous shamelessness, his infamous placards and publications upon the public, who cannot but shudder at the mingled impiety and obscenity* with which he seeks to pollute the community, particularly the humbler and less educated classes. There is another degraded being of the same stamp, Paterson's rival in this disgusting trade. We trust the authorities will stop at no measure which may be necessary to extinguish this horrible nuisance. These infamous persons, we are informed, deal in other than blasphemous and obscene publications, and we are assured that even some respectable persons, thoughtlessly, give them custom. It is the duty of every christian and right-thinking person to refrain from encouraging these miscreants in any way whatever. No decent person should enter their shops, and, if this plan were followed out, there is every reason to believe, that their hateful doctrines would be confined to their own minds; instead of being allowed, as at present, to poison the moral atmosphere of the town.—*Edinburgh Evening Post.*

To the Editor of the Courant.

Edinburgh, Aug. 17, 1843.

Sir.—In your paper, a week or two back, there was a paragraph stating that Paterson, the blasphemous publication vendor, had been

* From the Jew-book, in “Holy Bible” bill, referred to in p. 299.

apprehended, his books seized, and the shop closed. Now, whether Paterson is in custody or not, I cannot say; but instead of the shop being closed, the exhibition of his *disgusting publications* is carried on more openly than ever. This open defiance of the law, to say nothing of the gross outrage on public decency, calls loudly for prompt interference on the part of the authorities. The lord advocate, as the chief of the police executive, ought at once, by a vigorous prosecution, to put down such doings; and were the parties *severely punished* it would operate as a warning to others, and deter them from inflicting such a nuisance on the public. I am, &c., A LOVER OF DECENCY.

(COPY OF BILL.)

THOMAS PATERSON,

The only Scottish Atheistical Publisher,

Respectfully intimates to the respectable portion of Edinburgh's citizens that, having maturely considered the frantic bigotry and spiteful opposition called forth by his attempt to put down the bible-humbug; and being moreover fully convinced that god-belief is a false belief, and demoralising as false, he has resolved to supply the respectable thinkers of this city with works antidote to such priestly poison; works which cannot be unprejudicedly read without convincing their reader that the "holy bible" is a disgusting compound of lies, nonsense, and obscenity, and that the accursed belief in one god, or many gods, must be shown in all its hideous absurdity, before truth can triumph, and reason set its seal upon human actions.

Thomas Paterson is therefore of opinion, that, by constantly selling at his shop, 38, West Register-street, works of the excellent description referred to, *whether bigots in authority like it or not*, he will enlist on his behalf the sympathies and support of the intelligent in every class, and *specially the working-class*, as that is the section of society which, more than any other, suffers from the present system of political frauds, and religious imposture. The motto then of Thomas Paterson is—*atheism for the millions!* god and his book, for the priests! Citizens of Edinburgh! no longer submit to have the vile concoctions of priests palmed upon you as *divine revelation*, and learn that god-almighty was invented for god-worship—god-worship was instituted to perpetuate man-worship—man-worship creates and perpetuates mind-slavery, body-slavery, government plunder, church robbery, chapel cheatery—makes property of the soil, makes masters and servants, rich and poor, money lords, land lords, titled lords, shop lords, manufacturing lords, king, priest, lawyer,

soldier, constable, labourer, pauper, lady, gentleman—any thing and all things but—MAN, the noblest work of nature. Men of Edinburgh! Citizens of the world!! Cease to be victims to the conspiracy of priests, lords, and lawyers. Read, inquire, compare, reason, and be free.

SCOTTISH ANTI-PERSECUTION UNION'S

Appeal to the Friends of Mental Liberty.

THE prosecutions lately instituted by her majesty's advocate for Scotland, against the vendors of works treating speculative questions, demonstrated the expediency of an immediate and cordial union among the foes of persecution.

The formation of a Scottish Anti-Persecution Union was the first-fruit of those prosecutions. That union is made up of individual professors of almost every kind of opinion—political, religious, and irreligious. It was formed for the sole purpose of setting free the tongue and the press; therefore, all who are persecuted for expressing, or otherwise publishing their opinions, will have a legitimate claim to its support.

The Scottish Anti-Persecution Union will neither be a party engine, nor struggle for party or sectarian purposes. It will neither know nor care anything about opinions peculiar to individuals. If they are persecuted, the union will recognise and aid them, simply because they *are* persecuted.

The Scottish Anti-Persecution Union feels that the time has arrived when the friends of enlightened freedom must crush, or patiently submit to be crushed; when neutrality is nothing short of criminality, and not to act for liberty is, in effect, to act *against* it. Bigots in high places are crowding our prisons with victims. They are anxious, it would seem, to emulate the brutal intolerance of their ancestors, who, in the name of a god of mercy, made scaffolds reek with heretical gore. Like those ancestors, they are eager to crush every individual who has the honest manliness to publish opinions hostile to established creeds and systems.

The religious or political creed that is rational, has nothing to fear from opposition; but the creed, whether political or religious, that is *not* rational, has everything to fear from it; and therefore we behold the teachers of false creeds quailing before their opponents, like miserable culprits beneath the hangman's gripe. Christians are wont to boast the rationality of their creed, but in persecuting its opponents they act as though they thought it grossly irrational; and the Scottish Anti-Persecution Union must say, it is a reflection upon christianity, and a scandal to christians, that they are far more terrified by the arguments of infidels than ever were the pagans by the arguments of christians. If christianity is divine, it will surely stand, let who will conspire against it; but if "a cunningly-devised fable"—a religion invented by men, as surely will it fall, though countless legions draw the sword in its support.

The people of Scotland have been taught to think that conscience-coercion was at an end: they have been cajoled into the belief that *their* rulers would scorn to dishonour themselves or their religion, by alliance with an odious species of mental despotism. But they are deceived—grossly, miserably deceived. Scotland is, at this hour, the scene of an atrocious warfare against dissent; a warfare commenced and carried on by its chief law functionaries against the conscientious opponents of christianity. Scotland is still disgraced by persecutors; state hirelings, *who* would "bring to one dead level every mind," and, instead of conceding to all equal right, as regards questions of conscience, endeavour, by the infliction

of merciless punishments, to awe dissenters into silence.

Friends of mental freedom! is it fitting, is it just, that any individual should be denied the right openly to express what he thinks true? be either bribed or terrified into silence, when his conscience bids him speak? To freely speak what we honestly think, is the most valuable of all human privileges. It is a privilege all demand, and surely it is a privilege for which all should struggle. Then rally round the Scottish Anti-Persecution Union. Sink minor differences, and come to the support of a great principle. You love sincerity; then why stand idly by and see fellow-creatures goaded into the practice of hypocrisy? Why, in the name of consistency, laud sincerity as the first of virtues, while permitting your rulers to punish the sincere as the vilest of criminals?

The inconsistency, as well as injustice, of those protestant rulers, who protect one class of protesters, while they persecute another, must be evident to the dullest understanding. The protestant principle is a sound principle, or the reverse; but the Scottish Anti-Persecution Union calls upon protestant christians, in the name of common sense, and common humanity, to at once throw that principle overboard, or honestly act upon it. Protestantism in Scotland has assumed the presbyterian form. Here presbyterians may protest against church of Englandism, popery, and atheism, not merely with perfect safety, but with honour. If, however, they take to themselves the privilege of protesting against episcopalians, papists, and atheists, why should atheists, papists, and episcopalians be denied the right to protest against them? If presbyterians were true to their avowed principles, they would as freely allow the atheist to express his atheism, as they now freely express their presbyterianism; nay, they would not only acknowledge his *right* to do so, but *guarantee him in the full and free exercise thereof*. This, however, they have not done. This is what they will not do, until a sufficient number of energetic individuals unite to put down persecution; or, failing that, to encourage, sustain, and protect the persecuted.

The Scottish Anti-Persecution Union trusts that the foregoing statement of the *principle* it was formed to vindicate, the *objects* it is struggling to realise, and the *measures* it has determined to pursue, though brief, is perfectly explicit, and will not fail to draw around it enlightened individuals of every class, condition, and creed. This once effected, all will be effected; for then money will be freely subscribed, and the union no longer be trammelled in its work of usefulness from want of funds. Let its friends provide *inew*, and it will bravely carry on the *war*. That *inew* is money, which has been truly said to find *all roads open*.

Letters, money orders, &c., to be addressed to Mr. Budge, secretary, at W. and H. Robinson's, 11, Green-side-street, Edinburgh.

PUBLIC MEETING

OF THE ANTI-PERSECUTION UNION, AT JOHN-STREET INSTITUTION, TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE CASES OF

FINLAY, ROBINSON, AND PATERSON.

MR. HETHERINGTON, chairman, opened the proceedings with an admirable speech. He considered that the meeting ought to stand by Scotland's victims. He held the objects of the Anti-Persecution Union to be excellent. He would defend the broadest principle of liberty in these matters. Dr. Whitby had shown that there was no merit in belief,

or crime in disbelief, and the expression of opinion on the part of Messrs. Finlay, Robinson, and Paterson should be inviolate. The atheist ought to be heard as well as others—and doubtless would. The once obnoxious quaker had succeeded—the unitarian, who had taken away *two-thirds of god*, had triumphed. He was reminded of an old sailor who stepped on shore in Portsmouth, when a polemical controversy raged, and the walls were placarded with the words, "Christ is god." The old tar, not comprehending the change, said, he "supposed that the *old gentleman was dead*." (Great laughter.) He would stand by the question of free discussion, in the face of all consequences, as he ever had done. It was of no use being meally-mouthed. He called on the meeting to see that no honest men were prevented expressing their opinions. That person was not a man, who was shorn of the right of free speech. No person should be struck down, while he could prevent it. (Great cheering.)

Mr. HOLYOAKE said, a hope was entertained by the friends of humanity and liberty, that these infamous prosecutions for blasphemy were abandoned. But piety was a lasting curse. Scottish christians had put in their claim for the execration of posterity. Mr. Finlay was a brave old man—Robinson was a publisher of spirit—Paterson was worth a nation of ordinary religious reformers—and the bill stickers had stood up like men of sense and resolution. The system of seizing property and person, followed out by the procurator-fiscal, was ruinous, as well as oppressive. In detailing the cases to the meeting, he (Mr. H.) could not stigmatise one part as more atrocious than another—all was one black act of atrocity. About the resolution he proposed, there was no mistake. He gloried in those "simpletons," who set on foot prosecutions for blasphemy. It was a short and certain way of bringing christianity into contempt. The Anti-Persecution Union would act with determination on these cases, and he hoped that every public meeting would do irreparable mischief to orthodoxy, until christians were just. It was said that Mr. Paterson was not prudent, but surely it was always prudent to defend those rights which no man ought ever to relinquish. A writer in the *Edinburgh Courant*, had called on the lord advocate "to punish the Scotch victims with severity, as a warning to others." Now this warning to others, meant a warning that they should not be honest in the expression of their opinion, that they should not exercise that freedom which christians exercised. If this principle was to obtain, he (Mr. H.) would say, "Perish religion, and let equal justice prevail." He moved,

"That this meeting is of opinion that, in common justice, freedom of expression should be secured to the atheist as unreservedly as it is secured to the christian."

(To be continued)

PHYSICAL FORCE AND MORAL POWER.

IV.

THE questions of passive obedience, or resistance to civil authorities, are not new, but very old ones, and, as moral and political subjects, have been canvassed by most writers. Some viewing it religiously, have advocated the former, but when it came to the point, what they promised they did not perform. Few great names, none that I know of, have been consistent defenders of passive obedience—whilst the greatest names have figured on the other side—Hume, Paley, Blackstone, Paine, Charles James Fox, *cum multis aliis*. Hume, in his Essays, gives the pros and cons. It is impossible to define when a people should have recourse to physical force, it must depend on circumstances, but there is scarcely any person who denies its necessity. Mariana, the historian of Spain, in his famous work "De Institutione Regis"—the institution of a king—at a time when they were more or less the acting power in the states of Europe, recommends their assassination by the people—Escobac, and several others, not so famous as Mariana, are said to have been advocates of the same doctrine. Their arguments apply to the tyrants of our times. It would be absurd now to point their application at monarchs, so far are they subservient to the will of the people and public opinion, that they dare not exercise the tyranny of former ages. None but maniacs, therefore, are assassins of kings, and they do it because it has been done, and no more ought to bring into disrepute the sentence of national justice, than the dozen lord chancellors, confined in a mad-house at Dublin, when Sir Edward Sugden presented himself as one, to the keepers, should, as a necessary sequence, throw into disrepute his office of judge. In answer, therefore, to the last paragraph of the Coventry Socialist Lecturer, I recommend to all those engaged in the cause of human emancipation, and who really wish for it, a union in all practical measures of reform, a union of moral and physical force, and a repeal of all superstition. The experience of ages tells us that the world progresses in action and re-action, and if we think the world advances in civilisation, and wish it to go forward, we must accept the conditions of the movement. As to other means of reforming the world, if the C. S. L. refuses the experience of the past, and does not see in his own

social system, or the many hundred others, any hope for mankind, but only looks to some future extraordinary revelation, we are afraid he will be as much disappointed as all those in the past, who have been looking forward to these sudden metamorphoses, Messiahs, and milleniums. Take care that such a state of things does not bring one, as it did that impostor Jesus, and several other founders of religions. Now Bacon, who is the founder of induction, and recommends to judge from ascertained facts, shows what atheism has done, and therefore would do, for the world. As to the abuse rather liberally bestowed at starting, on the writer of the article, and the surprise that it should be found in the *Oracle*, we will remind him of the preliminary address in 66, concocted, we believe, by M. Q. R.

When re-establishing the standard first erected by Charles Southwell, they used his words—his wish to make fanatics of atheists. Perhaps this may account to the Coventry S. L. for what he thinks atheistic intolerance, and suicidal bigotry in the *Oracle*. With regard to physical force, there was another very ominous feature in the *Oracle of Reason*. When a shop was set up in Holywell-street for its sale, the firm published at the same time, their first speculation in that way, I believe, a penny pamphlet, on the military defence of the people. I approved, bought, and circulated the work, never thinking the conductors and supporters of the *Oracle*, meant by it the moral force of christianity, recommended by Jesus to those fools to whom it was given to understand it. G. J. H. speaks of Brutus using assassination, which is an admission of the meaning of the term, that the act was considered a virtue, and existed long before it got a name so horrible to ears polite and social, as assassination. I do not approve the instance of Brutus, and many other examples in the history of those conquerors of the world, who practised that base, sneaking, cowardly assassination, so despised by John Bull, who would run before a soldier, a policeman, or a constable, and take cold steel, as if it were an extract of iron, to strengthen his constitution, and allow himself to be robbed, as if he were suffering from repletion. But I certainly approve of those Romans under the emperors, who knowing they might have to die next day, considerably removed the cause the day before. What would G. J. H. do in the same situation? I have often wondered, reading the history of Henry the eighth, when his courtiers were trembling around him, each thinking that death might be his fate next, or that he might have to sit as judge, act as witness or advocate against a near relation, or dear friend, tried for a capital offence at the caprice of the

monarch, when eighty thousand of its people had risen against him, and been dispersed by five hundred beef-eaters—that some did not enter into a conspiracy, or that one, taking the consequences upon himself, did not assassinate the beast. Instead of that, we are told by Hume, that he was a very popular monarch, and died greatly regretted. After that, our socialist friends need not be afraid that the recommendation of physical force, or the adoption of assassination, is likely to be taken up by the English, to whom it was not recommended. We do not think they suffer under the same grievances as the Irish, or else they would think better of the recommendation. But I think, from past history, that the people of England have never met with the same success at home, in the use of physical force, as other people, and it would only be inciting them to destruction to invite them to the adoption of it. They may look to the physical force of Ireland for a redress of their grievances, or other external physical force, when, with an empty threat of violence, they may ascribe to moral power the obtainment of their rights. It is, therefore, our policy to assist the Irish, that they may assist us, and by the union of moral and physical force, make a demonstration in their favour, union and numbers combining for the same objects, that we may be able to use any advantage over our rulers, which the spontaneous combustion of public affairs may produce. The mere remonstrance of all parties against the employment of physical force, to prevent the Irish redressing their wrongs, might prevent coercion, and if civil war took place, the mere meetings, still more the marching about of unarmed men, would give some employment to the military in looking after them. How can the government and the upper classes believe the people are serious in wishing for any reforms, when they are indifferent to the struggles going on in another part of the kingdom, when they would look quietly on at the massacre of these people to obtain them, and would not use the opportunity it gave them of asking for, and obtaining their own liberties? Another correspondent, Mr. Jeffrey, who seems to think atheists were lambs, spite of the non-christianity of the *Oracle of Reason*, and the reiterated assurance of its undertakers that it was disposed to make fanatics of their party, at last expresses some surprise that reason can recommend acts as well as utter oracles, can enforce by example, as well as proclaim the truth. Does not Mr. Jeffrey know that a virtue, justice, is represented with scales in one hand, and a sword in the other, and that it would be no use measuring out justice, if it had not power to execute its decrees? Yet Mr. Jeffrey would think this an inconsistency,

because religion, muttering, bears a book in one hand and a sword in the other, and when you do not know what it says, cuts your throat. Though we exclaim against the murder & robbery preached and practised by a pretended deity and his people on all other nations, we never recommended passive obedience to the conquered. Because we held up to abhor the excesses in the Jew-book—because we opposed the violation of all moral commandments engendered by superstition—we never recommended those subject to it tamely to submit to the injustice. Because Jesus preached a sword, we never told people to bow their necks to it. The priesthood are the heirs to these doctrines and practices, the old and new dispensation, a church in conjunction with the state. On these principles, robbery and murder, they have occupied Ireland, and have always treated the people as Canaanites, Perizzites, Hittites, &c. They have not used a sword only to take possession, but, up to this time, have dedicated it to the service of Ireland, and fulfilled the words of Christ. We think the Irish are entitled to the use of that physical force, whether Gladstone-poison, or *Oracle*-assassination, which may best rid them of the curse. But we shall be still more enchanted if they obtain this victory by pure moral force, in the shortest possible period—we shall then fly abashed to the depths of hell, and acknowledge the Coventry Socialist Lecturer as the true Messiah, who prophesied peace and good-will towards men, and did not see his promise fulfilled by blood spilt, and the sword cutting the gordian knot of politics, and still given to be in inheritance to mankind.

W. J. B.

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For the Anti-Persecution Union.

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Second Editor—George Jacob Holyoake, imprisoned for six months, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.

Third Editor—Thomas Paterson, imprisoned for one month, for Blasphemous Placards, in London.

Vendors—George Adams, imprisoned for one month for selling No. 25, in Cheltenham; and

Harriet Adams, his wife, arrested for selling No. 4, in the same town.

No. 91.]

EDITED BY WILLIAM CHILTON.

[PRICE 1d.]

SECOND ARREST OF PATERSON, AND ROBBERY OF HIS SHOP BY THE PRESBYTERIAN THIEVES OF EDINBURGH.

Awake! what, ho! Infidels! thieves! thieves!
thieves!

Look to your homes, your liberties, and your rights!
Thieves! thieves!—*Othello* (travestied.)

He (god) is a merchant, the balances of *deceit* are
in his hand; he *loveth* to OPPRESS.—Hosea xii. 7.

WITH such a monster-god, as an object of
adoration and imitation, we should never be
surprised that christians are the villains we
find them. A moral christian would be a
greater curiosity than a gentle shark—there
could not be, in fact, a particle of morality
in a so-called christian, without his being so
much the less a christian than he who had
none. Neither is this to be wondered at, for

THE GOD OF THE CHRISTIANS IS

A LIAR,

And a lover of lying,

For he sent the people "strong delusions,
that they should believe a lie"—he put "a
lying spirit" into the mouth of the prophets
—"I, the lord god, have deceived that
prophet"—he bade Samuel tell a lie to de-
ceive Saul—and he instigated Jael to de-
ceive Sisera.

THE GOD OF THE CHRISTIANS IS

AN ADULTERER,

*And a lover of adultery, incest, and
whoredom,*

For Mary, the wife of Joseph, and mother
of Jesus, was with child by god, the *bastard*
Christ being the result—David, a man after
god's own heart, was a murderer and adul-
terer, and he found favour in his eyes—god
directed Hosea to take him "a wife of
whoredoms"—Moses, acting under his insti-
gation, directed all the women children that
had not known man by lying with him to be
kept alive for the soldiers—Abraham, his
chosen servant, married his sister—Lot was
especially saved from destruction by him, and

his wife enchanted, *that he may commit incest
with his own daughters.*

THE GOD OF THE CHRISTIANS IS

A MURDERER,

And a lover of bloodshed,

For he murdered the first-born of Egypt—
he slew Onan for not raising up seed to his
brother—he sought to kill Moses, or his first-
born—he burnt many of the people in the
wilderness—he swallowed up 250 for offer-
ing strange fire, and *afterwards* burnt them
—he sent lions amongst the people, and slew
them—he inspired Jael to deceive Sisera,
and afterwards horribly murder him, for
which bloody act she was declared to be
"blessed above women."

THE GOD OF THE CHRISTIANS IS

A THIEF!

And a lover of thievery,

For he gave Israel favour in the eyes of the
Egyptians, that the Israelites may despoil
them of their jewels of silver and jewels of
gold—he sanctioned and directed the num-
berless robberies perpetrated upon surround-
ing nations by his people—and, during his
human incarnation, stole a donkey.

THE GOD OF THE CHRISTIANS IS

A DEBAUCHEE!

And a lover of drunkenness,

For he made the princes, wise men, captains,
and rulers drunk—he commanded Jeremiah
to order the people to drink and be drunken
—he got drunk himself, and made others
drunk as well, at the feast of Cana—and
Noah and Lot, whom he had spared when
he had murdered thousands of others, both
got drunk and acted indecently, as soon as
their danger was over.

THE GOD OF THE CHRISTIANS IS

A CRUEL TYRANT!

And a lover of tyranny and cruelty,

For he most barbarously tortured the Egyp-
tians, for what he had compelled them to
do—he plagued the people of Israel with
fiery serpents, starved them, and subjected
them to the horrors of thirst—and the man
after his own heart, put men "under saws,
and under harrows of iron, and under axes

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of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln."

THE GOD OF THE CHRISTIANS IS
A LEWD, IMPURE, GROSS, AND
OBSCENE PERSON,

*And a lover of lewdness, impurity, grossness,
and obscenity,*

For he wrote the bible, which is a lewd, impure, gross, and obscene book—and he permitted the lewdness, impurity, grossness, and obscenity therein recorded.

The above is a true picture of the christian's god—the object of their reverence and love—taken from his own recorded acts, described by his own pen. Who then can wonder at the crimes of christians? The goddess of the Thugs delights in blood and murder—and the Thugs, therefore, are murderers by profession. The god of the christians is a liar, an adulterer, a whoremonger, a murderer, a thief, a debauchee, a cruel tyrant, a lewd, impure, gross, and obscene person—and christians are liars, adulterers, whoremongers, murderers, thieves, debauchees, cruel tyrants, and lewd, impure, gross, and obscene persons, from love and respect for their god.

The presbyterians of Edinburgh are *par excellence* the best specimens of the genus christian in this kingdom. Their first act, in the present war with morality, was to lay violent hands on Finlay and Robinson, and to rob their houses—their next, to bring an unjust charge of obscenity against Robinson, to cloak their own indecent acts—then they arrested and robbed Paterson—subsequently they fell upon his bills and bill-stickers, arresting five of the latter—and, on Monday, Aug. 28, they again took forcible possession of Paterson's person, and plundered his house. They did not find much to gratify their cupidity on this occasion. The following is a list of the property seized:—11 bills, Holy Bible and Beauties of ditto; 22 Investigators; 42 Oracles; 11 Library of Reason; 8 bills of Conscience; 6 A Roll and Treacle for prophet 'Zekel; 2 Haslam's Letter to the Clergy; 1 Jesus Christ the Reformer; 7 Spirit of Bonner; 1 Efficacy of Prayer; 3 Home Thrusts at the Atrocious Trinity; 38 bills headed Thomas Paterson; 1 bill headed, Under the Patronage of the Procurator-fiscal; 1 large placard, Oracle of Reason; 3 bills, Almost Thou Persuadest me to be a Christian; 1 Christianity a Failure; 1 Ought there to be a Law against Blasphemy; 2 Character of the Christian Priests and Ceremonies; 1 Essay on a Future State of Existence; 1 Holy Bible pamphlet; 1 bill, Prospectus of Oracle of Reason; 1 tract, Trinity of Trinities; 1 placard, headed Caution; 1 do., headed Queries, taken from Investigator; 1 Board, which stood at the door,

cost of which was 4s., various placards are on the board.

The brutality of christianity is strikingly exhibited in the cries for vengeance which issue from the press, and the threats of punishment which fall from the lips of the magistrates. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned," is the motto of christians, and to the letter they fulfilled it but a few years since—*now* robbery, dungeon, fine, and heartless brutality, endangering life, take the place of the stake and fagot, the thumb-screw, boot, and rack—not because christianity is more human now than then, but because infidelity has increased, science has advanced, and the sanguinary villains professing the monster creed *dare* not do as they would *wish*.

The extracts from the christian press of this christian land, which appeared in No. 57, in reference to the Holywell-street placards, and the outrages upon the property of Paterson, by christian ruffians, as well as the extracts from the Edinburgh press which are inserted in this and previous numbers, are exceedingly valuable. Men should "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" them, and doing so, they will not lack food for reflection, nor unprofitably occupy their mind. Therein will be seen the christian character, in all its naked deformity—the cloak of cunning and hypocrisy cast away, the proportions of the monster are fairly exhibited to view. To those who would object to the course which has been pursued by Paterson, both in London and Edinburgh, I would say—look at the results—look at the blood-thirsty, murdering spirit which belongs to christianity, and which a little opposition has developed. Is it of no consequence that infidels should know the full extent of their danger, and not repose upon a hidden volcano? Some have attempted to humanise christianity, but their labours have been crowned with the same result which followed the scrubbing of the blackamoor. Tyranny and brutality is the nature of christianity, and herein it is true to its origin. The same persecuting spirit of extermination which influenced christians in their treatment of the Roman gods, in the massacre of the Waldenses and Albigenses, of St. Bartholomew—in the tortures and burnings of the inquisition, of Smithfield, and of the dissenters—this diabolical spirit still exists, but men appear oblivious of the fact. Their eyes *should* be opened to the fact, that nothing short of the utter destruction of the accursed system can ever bring peace to those countries where its baleful influence is felt.—Paterson was bailed out on Wednesday, Aug. 30.

W. C.

MORAL FORCE.

THE moral force of popular songs has been more strikingly exemplified than any other species of moral force, particularly when the apparent insignificance of the means is considered. Thus the Lacedemonians asked of the Athenians a general, and Tyrtæus, a poet, was sent, in jest, who so animated the people by his songs, that without himself possessing the slightest knowledge of arms, he led them to victory. Lord Wharton boasted that by his ballad of Lillibulero, he had sung a prince, James the second, out of three kingdoms. Bishop Burnet says, "The whole army, and, at last, the people, both in city and country, were singing it perpetually. And, perhaps, never had so slight a thing so great an effect." It is well known that to the poetical effusions of Beranger, is attributed the spirit of the French people, which produced the revolution of 1830. It must be mentioned to the honour and sagacity of those concerned in the *Oracle of Reason*, particularly the late firm in Holywell-street, Paterson and Co., that they did not neglect so potent an auxiliary as poetry, in the cause of infidelity. The publication of "The Yahoo," and "The Great Dragon Cast Out," were immediately undertaken—of the genius displayed in which it need only be said, that, if the subject had been any other, and the same means which bring other works into notice, had introduced those performances to the world, they would have obtained an instant circulation, never witnessed since the days of Lord Byron's poems. However, no sooner known than they became text-books to unbelievers, small and great, private and public, and their author is acknowledged to be the great unknown, the poet laureate of his invisible majesty. His advent is a whirlwind, and his Pegasus must be a broom, such as the witches of old were supposed to ride, ready to sweep away the abominations he satirises. Such short pieces as we could collect from time to time, and from different sources, we have inserted in the *Oracle*. We are now about to introduce to our readers something original, from the pen of one whose aid we hope to have in future, and who follows the laudable practice, which we hold out for imitation, of having his compositions of this character sung in chorus by a numerous household. It would be some variety to the authorities at Edinburgh, who are so diligently employed in taking up posters and tearing down bills, to have brought before them the populace caught in the fact of singing the Holy Willie of their national bard, Burns. We recommend the trial of such psalmody to our friends there, surely the patronage of the great Scotch poet and

his works could not be considered intrusion even by the fiercest non-intrusionist.

W. J. B.

THE WONDER OF THE LORD.

AN ANTEDILUVIAN VISION.

After Beranger.

The windows of heaven were opened.
And god looked upon the earth.—*Genesis*.
God swore in his wrath.—*Psalm of David*.

THE good god once look'd out o' window,
To examine the ways of our earth :
He saw there abundance of misery,
Plenteous wrong ; but a dearth
Of justice and loving kindness.
Lo ! where a fat vicar, bad
The multitude feed him and perish :
God had given him orders to cherish
His belly, and bless them with blindness—
God said, he'd be bless'd if he had.

No matter ! the vicar got mitred,
So cared not for truth or for heaven :
Making mouths at a sovereign levee,
Dining on gold. He has given
His vote for a century war ;
And he swore there was excellent cause :
They were wealthy, and weak, and eschew'd
Christian opium (Christ never chew'd) ;
And besides, was not murder* god's
whore ?—
God wish'd he might die if she was.

'Twas words thrown away to the bishop,
Who knew god no more than a pig.
He is whispering close at the ear
Of a legislatorial *whig* :
A poor-law is needful : the poor
Are gnawing our crack'd coffer-lid ;
They will get at our gold. Good folk,
Pray, eat less, and mind your work !
God told me to show you the door—
God said, he'd be hang'd if he did.

Now the bishop is girt with his apron ;
In his mammon-shop he stands :
What d'ye buy ? what d'ye buy ? Light
weights there !
My lord devil ! any commands ?—
How's trade ? God be praised ! in our
parts
Brisk. Was not the talented† bid
To traffic ? We come by our wares
Quite fairly. A bale of despairs,
Of the right sort—real labourers' hearts :
Old chap at the window, d'ye bid ?

In a pet the lord shut down the window :
O, Christ ! what to do with all this ?
So he turn'd him to take his siesta—
'Twas after his dinner, I wis.
But the many, now starv'd into rudeness,

* Wordsworth calls murder, or carnage (which we presume is the same), god's daughter ; but no doubt the poet will readily give place to the better authority of the bishop.

† See the parable of the talents ; Matt., chap. 25.

Took to pebbles—then stones—then the few
Were pitch'd through the glaze. What's
the matter ?

Said god, waking up at the clatter ;

Cried the "lords," O, pray save us, your
goodness !

Said *the lord*, I'll be damn'd if I do.

G.O.D.

THEORY OF REGULAR GRADATION.

XLII.

(Lyell's Digest of Lamarck's Theory.)

"THE greater the abundance of natural objects assembled together, the more do we discover proofs that everything passes, by insensible shades, into something else ; that even the more remarkable differences are evanescent, and that nature has, for the most part, left us nothing at our disposal for establishing distinctions, save trifling, and, in some respects, puerile particularities.

"We find that many genera amongst animals and plants are of such an extent, in consequence of the number of species referred to them, that the study and determination of these last has become almost impracticable. When the species are arranged in a series, and placed near to each other, with due regard to their natural affinities, they each differ in so minute a degree from those next adjoining, that they almost melt into each other, and are in a manner confounded together. If we see isolated species, we may presume the absence of some more closely connected, and which have not yet been discovered. Already are there genera, and even entire orders—nay, whole classes, which present an approximation to the state of things here indicated.

"If, when species have been thus placed in a regular series, we select one, and then, making a leap over several intermediate ones, we take a second, at some distance from the first, these two will, on comparison, be seen to be very dissimilar ; and it is in this manner that every naturalist begins to study the objects which are at his own door. He then finds it an easy task to establish generic and specific distinctions ; and it is only when his experience is enlarged, and when he has made himself master of the intermediate links, that his difficulties and ambiguities begin. But while we are thus compelled to resort to trifling and minute characters, in our attempt to separate species, we find a striking disparity between individuals which we know to have descended from a common stock, and these newly-acquired peculiarities are regularly transmitted from one generation to another, constituting what are called *races*.

"From a great number of facts, continues the author, we learn that, in proportion as

the individuals of one of our species change their situation, climate, and manner of living, they change also, by little and little, the consistence and proportions of their parts, their form, their faculties, and even their organisation, in such a manner, that everything in them comes at last to participate in the mutations to which they have been exposed. Even in the same climate a great difference of situation and exposure causes individuals to vary ; but if these individuals continue to live and to be reproduced under the same difference of circumstances, distinctions are brought about in them which become in some degree essential to their existence. In a word, at the end of many successive generations, these individuals, which originally belonged to another species, are transformed into a new and distinct species. Thus, for example, if the seeds of a grass, or any other plant which grows naturally in a moist meadow, be accidentally transported, first to the slope of some neighbouring hill, where the soil, although at a greater elevation, is damp enough to allow the plant to live ; and if, after having lived there, and having been several times regenerated, it reaches by degrees the drier and almost arid soil of a mountain declivity, it will then, if it succeeds in growing and perpetuates itself for a series of generations, be so changed that botanists who meet with it will regard it as a particular species. The unfavourable climate in this case, deficiency of nourishment, exposure to the winds, and other causes, give rise to a stunted and dwarfish race, with some organs more developed than others, and having proportions often quite peculiar.

"What nature brings about in a great lapse of time, we occasion suddenly by changing the circumstances in which a species has been accustomed to live. All are aware that vegetables taken from their birth-place and cultivated in gardens, undergo changes which render them no longer recognisable as the same plants. Many which were naturally hairy become smooth or nearly so ; a great number of such as were creepers and trailed along the ground, rear their stalks and grow erect. Others lose their thorns or asperities ; others, again, from the ligneous state which their stem possessed in hot climates, where they were indigenous, pass to the herbaceous, and, among them, some which were perennials become mere annuals. So well do botanists know the effects of such changes of circumstances, that they are averse to describe species from garden specimens, unless they are sure that they have been cultivated for a very short period.

"'Is not the cultivated wheat' (*triticum sativum*), asks Lamarck, 'a vegetable brought by man into the state in which we now see it ? Let any one tell me in what country a similar plant grows wild, unless where it has

escaped from cultivated fields? Where do we find in nature our cabbages, lettuces, and other culinary vegetables, in the state in which they appear in our gardens? Is it not the same in regard to a great quantity of animals which domesticity has changed or considerably modified? Our domestic fowls and pigeons are unlike any wild birds. Our domestic ducks and geese have lost the faculty of raising themselves into the higher regions of the air, and crossing extensive countries in their flight, like the wild ducks and wild geese from which they were originally derived. A bird which we breed in a cage cannot, when restored to liberty, fly like others of the same species which have been always free. This small alteration of circumstances, however, has only diminished the power of flight, without modifying the form of any part of the wings. But when individuals of the same race are retained in captivity during a considerable length of time, the form even of their parts is gradually made to differ, especially if climate, nourishment, and other circumstances, be also altered.

"The numerous races of dogs which we have produced by domesticity, are nowhere to be found in a wild state. In nature we should seek in vain for mastiffs, harriers, spaniels, greyhounds, and other races, between which the differences are sometimes so great, that they would be readily admitted as specific between wild animals; 'Yet all these have sprung originally from a single race, at first approaching very near to a wolf, if, indeed, the wolf be not the true type which at some period or other was domesticated by man.'

"Although important changes in the nature of the places which they inhabit modify the organisation of animals as well as vegetables, yet the former, says Lamarck, require more time to complete a considerable degree of transmutation, and, consequently, we are less sensible of such occurrences. Next to a diversity of the medium in which animals or plants may live, the circumstances which have most influence in modifying their organs are differences in exposure, climate, the nature of the soil, and other local particulars. These *circumstances* are as varied as are the characters of species, and, like them, pass by insensible shades into each other, there being every intermediate gradation between the opposite extremes. But each locality remains for a very long time the same, and is altered so slowly that we can only become conscious of the reality of the change, by consulting geological monuments, by which we learn that the order of things which now reigns in each place has not always prevailed, and by inference anticipate that it will not always continue the same.

"Every considerable alteration in the local circumstances in which each race of ani-

mals exists, causes a change in their wants, and these new wants excite them to new actions and habits. These actions require the more frequent employment of some parts before but slightly exercised, and then greater development follows as a consequence of their more frequent use. Other organs no longer in use are impoverished and diminished in size, nay, are sometimes entirely annihilated, while in their place new parts are insensibly produced for the discharge of new functions."

FINAL REPLY

TO THE MISTAKES OF G. J. H.

IN answer to the second article on the socialist god, I beg to say:

1. That the argument is *not* that the Coventry god is better than the Burnley one, but the argument *is*, that the former is the god of the "Outline," whilst the latter is not.

2. Burnley is not in the Potteries, but is situated in as enlightened a county, as any town in England—and therefore his "ought to be" inference, falls to the ground completely.

3. Coventry is quite as true to principle as Worcester, for Coventry did not *con-*
descend to apologise or explain why they employed G. J. H. Can G. J. H. inform the readers of the *Oracle*, why the Rational Society should mis-state its authorised views, because they do not meet his own?

4. The Coventry Socialist Lecturer does not know that the congresses have thrown overboard the "Outline," nay, farther, he denies that any socialist congress has done anything of the sort.

5. It does not matter whether the Coventry Socialist Lecturer is in advance of the address he defends, so long as he knows that the principles of the society are stated fairly in the address alluded to, and that the society is still open to further reform.

6. Whilst G. J. H. was editor of the *Oracle*, he sought to reform the Rational Society, but he never attempted to show that the first article of the so-called rational religion was specially false.

QUALIFICATION OF A GOOD PARSON.—

Lord Campbell, when speaking the other night in the House of Lords, on the Defamation and Libel Bill, said, "There was a case in year books, in which the grossest language had been used towards a clergyman, who had been called a *damned fool*, but it was ruled that no action would lie; that if indeed the phrase had been applied to a lawyer, it would be actionable, as being likely to injure him in his profession; but that as regarded a clergyman, it was possible in the law French phrase to be a *bon parson et a damned fool*. (Loud laughter.)"

—*Times*, Wednesday, August 23.

REPORT OF PUBLIC MEETING
AT JOHN STREET.

(Continued.)

MR. LORIMER seconded the resolution moved by Mr. Holyoake.

MR. BUCHANAN said that the law of Scotland added robbery to oppression, by seizing the property, as well as the person, of the offending party. Ignorant policemen were judges of what was blasphemy, and their dicta was allowed to be sufficient for its removal—a tyranny against which all should protest. He strenuously insisted on the hardship of Mr. Robinson's case. If a christian was to be considered as horrified at the bible being called an obscene book, he could not see why an atheist should not have the same right to be horrified at the bible being called holy. Edinburgh has parsons, universities, and learning enough to answer Messrs. Finlay, Robinson, and Paterson, if they were answerable. Why did our so-called liberal journals, which had used to hold up these cases to execration, not do it now—or if they did notice them, it was in such a cold manner as to do more harm than good. He would move,

“That this meeting regards as disgraceful in the highest degree, the conduct of all parties who have promoted, and are carrying on, prosecutions for blasphemy, in the city of Edinburgh.”

MR. RUFFEY RIDLEY came forward from a sense of *duty*, to second this resolution. The highest degree of moral force had been called physical force—in this sense he was a physical force theologian (laughter), and he would bring this force fully to bear on the authorities of Edinburgh. Their opposition to Mr. Paterson and others, was dastardly. He would have kingcraft and priestcraft submitted to the arena of public discussion, and we should do no good until *godcraft* was there also. Paterson was a brave man, and deserved their best support—christians treated him as they are said to have treated Shylock. But Mr. Paterson was a man like themselves, and had human feelings, and a bold spirit to retaliate on christian injustice. If infidels were trampled on—none of their just rights respected—if christians only set them, as they did Shylock, the example of villany, they might be disposed to “*better the instructions.*” (Applause.)

MR. McCULLOCH, of Brighton, wished to enforce the principle, that in judging of the cases of Messrs. Finlay, Robinson, & Paterson, no distinction should obtain—one common act of injustice had made victims of them all. He would say a word in defence of Mr. Paterson. He (Mr. McC.) considered that Mr. Paterson had taken the bull of priestcraft by the horns. His life and

liberty were at stake. He was fighting a battle for them. (Cheers.)

MR. MALTUS RYALL considered this a plain case, and demanded only plain words. He agreed with Mr. McCulloch, that Messrs. Finlay, Robinson, and Paterson, were the victims of one common act of christian injustice. The triumph of might over right—of intolerance over liberty, had struck them all down. Let every lover of justice struggle to reverse this. He denied that Paterson went to *brave* the authorities of Edinburgh—he went to *defend* a great right—and nobly he was doing it. Mr. Paterson left an agreeable situation to stand in the gap of oppression. He went out a kind of forlorn hope, to make a bridge for others to walk over to liberty. Let those at home think of this, and subscribe accordingly. The Anti-Persecution Union was now managed by Mr. Holyoake, whom they all knew, a man of energy and business habits. Apart from the nature of its claims, the Union, in every sense, deserved support. His resolution asked their assistance for the Edinburgh victims. It was only fair to say, that the bill-stickers had displayed qualities deserving notice. They were a useful class of men, and those engaged by Mr. Paterson had shown no more inclination to be trampled on than persons moving in higher spheres. He cordially moved:

“That this meeting express no barren sympathy with Messrs. Robinson, Finlay, & Paterson, and others, who are nobly struggling for the right of free discussion—but pledges itself to aid them by every legitimate means in its power.”

MR. SKELTON would stand by every man who made sacrifices for liberty. He thought that the cases of Messrs. Finlay, Robinson, & Paterson, deserved all possible assistance. They were rendering great service to the cause of liberty, but, by reason of the late hour, he would not enlarge, but briefly second the resolution.

MR. HETHERINGTON, before putting the resolution, would make a remark. He considered Mr. Paterson in the light of a strong man, who stood up to defend weaker men from the attacks of robbers. Mr. Paterson was a brave man. He (Mr. H.) felt indebted to him. He had talked with Mr. Paterson on the day he set out for Edinburgh, and he believed his motives to be pure.

The resolutions were carried with but two dissentients, although the meeting was numerous.

REVIEW.

A practical work on the management of Small Farms. By Feargus O'Connor, Esq.

PEOPLE were formerly employed in discovering the elixir vitæ, the philosophers'

stone, with which to transmute base metals into gold. Many valuable discoveries they say were made, though the alchemists never arrived at the object of their labours. Now all minds are employed in devising plans for the greatest happiness of the greatest number, in the shortest possible period, and no doubt the general result will be for the good of mankind. Mr. Feargus O'Connor objects to the community of labour principle, and preferring the competitive system of present society, would have all the country divided into four-acre farms for each family. He thinks the possession of a home, individual liberty, and no necessity to change abode, more natural to man than dwelling together under one roof, being made subject to rules, and being drawn from one part of a country to inhabit another, pp. 113, and 129. He proposes to carry out his plan by lottery, a small sum subscribed by weekly subscriptions, giving a man at the end of the year, the time of drawing, the chance of a four-acre estate. Speaking of Ireland, where the system of small farms has long existed, he says, p. 101, "This very system of bidding over the heads of small farmers without leases, who have improved their little holdings, has led to more murders than any other circumstance—to more murders? nay, to every murder that has been committed in Ireland for the last forty-three years, and each and every one of which are chargeable upon the tyrant landlords, land sharks, land agents, and middlemen, and not upon the maddened, plundered, infuriated peasant, who, in the wildness of despair, takes that vengeance in lieu of the satisfaction which the law denies him." However, Mr. F. O'Connor must take into account that it is the disposition of many people here to pity more the tyrant landlords, land sharks, land agents, and middlemen, than the maddened, plundered, infuriated peasantry. According to a new code of morality, murderers, robbers, and persecutors, the creatures of circumstances, are much more entitled to sympathy, than those who, under the influence of such vulgar circumstances, as a regard for their own life, property, and conscience, sometimes turn upon their aggressors. The results of the past session of parliament are nothing for the people—but the effects of physical force without, O'Connell's monster demonstrations, have been to make Sir Robert Peel promise to consider the subject of fixity of tenure. O'Connor would obviate all difficulty about leases by buying the land, but we think that the law of primogeniture and entail, and the expenses in the transfer of landed property, would be hindrances to any complete realisation of his scheme. In France, where these laws were abolished by the revolution, this subdivision of land has

taken place to a great extent. However, according to the prophecy of Mr. O'Connor, p. 141, we are to arrive in political matters, at the end of all things, next session of parliament.

W. J. B.

(COPY OF BILL.)

RECANTATION

OF THOMAS PATERSON,

Of 38, West Register-Street—showing his miraculous conversion from the horrors of infidelity to the glorious truths of the christian religion.

THAT omnipotent god, whose holy book I had slandered, whose blessed religion I had reviled, and whose very existence I had denied, has, in his infinite mercy, snatched my soul from hell, by opening my eyes to the truth, and showing to my long darkened understanding the awful precipice whereon I stood! Oh! little did I think, while reading, in a spirit of rebellion against god, his account of the miraculous conversion of Saint Paul, that I should myself be one day converted in a manner scarcely less marvellous! But, by the blessing of god, I have been turned from the error of my ways; and through faith in Jesus Christ, permitted to comprehend the mysteries of his holy religion; to flee to his cross for refuge, and be filled with joyful hope, that through his precious blood my soul may be purged of its sins, and prepared for that blessed state of immortality promised to all who sincerely believe his holy gospel. It was faith, fellow-christians, unworthy and rebellious as I was, that god vouchsafed, which has turned my thoughts in penitence towards the lamb which taketh away the sins of the world; it is faith has taught me the saving, the glorious truth—more precious than rubies—that my redeemer liveth, and will pardon! Yes, it is faith has softened my heart, turned my steps from the paths of the infidel, and, with the grace of god, will enable me to war for the kingdom of Christ with far more zeal and unspeakably more joy than I ever yet did in my vain and wicked attempt to build up the temple of satan. Oh, ye infidels! hear my voice, be warned in time; close not your ears, close not your eyes, close not your hearts, but follow the blessed example Christ has permitted me to set you! Remember, that I was an atheist, and that now I am humbled before almighty god! That I scoffed at the name and religion of Christ; but now adore my crucified saviour! having renounced the devil and all his wiles. Yes, christians of Edinburgh! I came among you a mocker at all religion, a despiser of Jesus, and a hater of god; but he who died for sinners, has plucked me like a brand from the furnace, and revealed himself to my spiritual eyes in all the bright effulgence of his glory! May the excellent minister of god's word, who through Christ

THE ORACLE OF REASON.

was the instrument of my conversion, enjoy that peace which passeth all understanding, both here and evermore. Amen.

Oh! may I stand before the lamb,
When earth and seas are fled,
And hear the judge proclaim my name,
With blessings on my head.

Almighty father of mankind,
On thee my hopes remain,
And when the day of trouble comes,
I shall not trust in vain.

I now know well the power I trust,
The arm on which I lean;
He will my saviour ever be,
Who has my saviour been.

Therefore through life I'll trust in thee,
In death I will adore,
And after death will sing thy praise,
When time shall be no more.

THOMAS PATERSON,

By the grace of god converted to christianity
through the instrumentality of one of its
ministers.

FAVORABLE NOTICES OF "THE MAN."

BLASPHEMOUS PLACARDS.—Two young men were apprehended on the morning of sabbath, 13th inst. posting placards of a blasphemous character, and brought before sheriff McDonald, in the police court, on the following Monday, but were remanded till yesterday, when the parties were again placed at the bar. On the charge being read, both pleaded guilty to posting the bills libelled upon, but denied they were of a blasphemous tendency, or their conduct in doing so an annoyance to the public. Proof was led to show that they were the parties who had posted the bills, and also that frequent complaints had been lodged at the police office against their doing so. On being asked by sheriff McDonald if they had any thing to say for themselves, one of them, apparently more hardened in wickedness than the other, in a speech of considerable length and of a most blasphemous nature, went on to show that the work in which they had been engaged was highly commendable, in as much as they were acquainting the public where a class of works could be found that were in much request, and of the utmost importance to the inquiring mind. "The Bible a Dangerous Book for Youth," was one upon which he specially condescended to comment, and said he was quite prepared to prove its (the bible's) dangerous tendency. "God versus Paterson," was another on which he lavished his praise, and commented in language so horrible, that our blood chilled in our veins, and a burst of virtuous indignation issued from the assembled audience. He concluded his remarks by stating that, in the event of his being punished, he was more resolved than ever to pursue his infidel career, and exert himself for the propagation of his favourite doctrines, which he was glad to say, hundreds in this city had espoused. The presiding judge, after listening with the utmost patience to an harangue which must have grated harshly upon his feelings, said, that however much they might think themselves entitled to pursue their infidel career, one thing was equally obvious, that they had contravened the laws of this and every other civilised country, which wisely protected the inhabitants from any such gross outrage upon their feelings and religion as that with which they were charged, and, partly, by their own confession, found guilty. If one thing could aggravate the crime more than another, and alter his decision in the case, it would be the speech which had been delivered in its defence. He would not, however, on this occasion, suffer his feelings to interfere with his

judgment, and the decision now would still be the same as if that speech had not been delivered, believing them to be mere tools in the hands of others, and not the principal agents themselves; and this being the first case of the kind brought before him in that court, the punishment which he was about to award was much lighter than it would have been in different circumstances. *He would, however, warn them against following their wild pretensions, for the punishment next time would be of a much more serious description.* He would now order them to find caution of £10, or go to prison for thirty days.—*Edinburgh Observer.*

INFIDEL PUBLICATIONS.—The wretched man Paterson, who has brought himself into such unenviable notoriety of late by exposing for sale blasphemous works, and by the circulation of infamous placards, calculated to shock the feelings of every right-thinking member of the community, still continues to defy the authorities, notwithstanding his apprehension some weeks since, when he was admitted to bail. Accordingly, on Monday morning he was again taken into custody by Mr. Scott, the procurator-fiscal, at his shop in Register-street, and some of his publications were seized at the same time. The offence being bailable, it is probable he may continue to practise the same evasion every time his bail-bond is completed, until he is brought to trial. The audacity of the man, and those with whom he is associated, may be conceived, when we mention that they have not scrupled to send circulars containing the most atrocious blasphemies, and a list of their atheistical publications to respectable individuals, thus at once insulting the feelings of the public, and aiming at a more extensive circulation of the unadulterated poison in which these desperate men have chosen to deal.—*Weekly Register.*

VALUABLE EDUCATION.—The other day a little fellow in Birmingham, who had just returned from school, where he had been instructed in the mysteries of the church catechism, thus discoursed to his younger brother—"Will, I wish our dog would die, and ascend into hell, and rise again the third day."—(This species of education promises magnificent things for the rising generation).

NOTICE.

Received—Assassination, by Diagoras Atheos. On the Propagation of our views. Political Scourge. Next public meeting of the Anti-Persecution Union, in London, will be held in the City Road Institution, on Tuesday evening, Sep. 12, 1843.

On Oct. 7, the new committee of the Anti-Persecution Union will present in the Oracle their first quarterly balance sheet of receipts and expenditure.

G. J. H. Sec.

SUBSCRIPTIONS,

For the Anti-Persecution Union.

Received of W. J. by Mrs. Martin ..	£0	5	0
R. N. Bristol	0	1	0
C. B. ditto	0	1	0
R. W. D. ditto	0	1	0
T. M. ditto	0	1	0
A Friend to Liberty ditto..	0	1	0
C. D. London	0	2	0
William Palmer, ditto	0	1	0
"From a Bath Friend"	0	2	6

Presented by Mr. W. Smith, manufacturer, an Improved Invoice-File, for the use of the "Scottish Anti-Persecution Union." G. J. H., Sec.

Printed and Published by WILLIAM CHILTON, No. 40, Holywell-street, Strand, London.

Saturday, Sep. 9, 1843.

THE ORACLE OF REASON:

Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE."

First Editor—Charles Southwell, imprisoned for twelve months and fined £100, for Blasphemy in No. 4.
Second Editor—George Jacob Holyoake, imprisoned for six months, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.
Third Editor—Thomas Paterson, imprisoned for one month, for Blasphemous Placards, in London.
Vendors—George Adams, imprisoned for one month for selling No. 25, in Cheltenham; and Harriet Adams, his wife, arrested for selling No. 4, in the same town.

No. 92.] EDITED BY WILLIAM CHILTON. [PRICE 1D.

EPISTLES—NOT PAUL'S.

IV.

(Continued from page 211.)

It is some presumption to say of a god, whose ways are represented as past finding out, that he is in a state of high displeasure. However, we do not wish to impute blasphemy to the court of justice, and therefore suppose it is only meant to use a figurative form of speech to express the high displeasure of Mr. Close and the clergy of Cheltenham, at the impious idea of being put upon half-pay. No doubt of the great scandal and reproach to them in such a proposition—it must have burst like a bomb among the parsons of our modern Jerusalem. Even the counsel said he could scarce expect the horrible blasphemy of putting the parsons upon half-pay. Certainly such an example as George Jacob Holyoake and his words, might have produced their consequences, but not quite so dreadful as we see in the evil example of Jesus, who said that many others would follow in his footsteps, and we have had christs, messiahs, shilohs, up to the present time. To sum up the whole force of an evil example: everything bad in christendom, since the appearance of Jesus, has been done in his name, in obedience to his divine injunctions, and professing to copy his holy example, up to the imprisonment of George Jacob Holyoake. Being martyrs and making martyrs, fire and sword, comprising the whole stock-in-trade of christianity. Whereas the example of George Jacob Holyoake went to teach the people how to live and let live. When asked his opinion, his answer went to assert the right of private judgment. When that is granted, of necessity the clergy are useless—politically and morally they are the great hindrances to all improvement, therefore he recommended that this standing army to suppress liberty of opinion should be disbanded, and too kindly and considerately urged that those, to him, ungrateful wretches should be put upon half-pay. It is false witness to accuse George Jacob Holyoake of attempting the peace of our queen or her subjects. Much more consid-

tently with his actions than those of the utterer, might he have addressed them, each and all, in the words of Jesus, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!" Jesus, who gave the lie to the angels, who announced his mission, "on earth peace and goodwill towards men," by saying "that he was come not to bring peace but a sword into the world," might have been justly accused of infringing the peace of the city, which he wept over for rejecting him as the bearer of peace. When he who came to fulfil, but not destroy, the law of Moses, spoke and acted contrary to the mosaic institutions, he might have been charged with violating the laws of his country. In any other man it would not be an excuse, but rather an aggravation of the offence, that his native land had fallen under foreign dominion, and had not power to enforce the laws, which he had volunteered to observe. It would be no moral justification, that he spoke of mysteries, in riddles which they could not, neither did he mean the authorities to, understand: "That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them." Honest people do not generally make a practice of speaking plain, that it may await any chance or metaphysical meaning, or escape from the common meaning by a quibble, like Jesus, whose use of language was to make metaphors matters of fact, and matters of fact metaphors. It is only when our highest interests are concerned we are to be trifled with. We can only discover and have faith in divinities, bent on extraordinary missions from heaven to earth, when we meet with persons at large who behave and discourse like infants, fools, drunkards, and madmen. When G. J. Holyoake, in language not to be misunderstood, and actuated by benevolent intentions, addressed the people on their material interests, they seize upon some expression in conversation, they refuse to acknowledge the only literal sense in which his words can be applied, and attach to them an incomprehensible mystery. But when he whose yoke was easy, and whose burden was

light, who came to pour oil into their wounds, and fill their hearts with gladness, belabored those who sold and bought in the temple, stole donkeys, resisted authorities come to take him up, and said that he was king of the Jews, which was high treason against Cæsar—he was not only guilty of violating the laws and religion of the realm, but of disturbing the peace. The time was come when he was to show us how to act by acting differently from everybody else, and all the vulgar notions of right and wrong. The time was come when his words were to be fulfilled, and he was to teach us by example the meaning of his moral laws, when his sermon on one mount was to be explained by his hour of trial on a second, and his execution on a third. His preaching transferred from the country into the city was to be reduced into practice. Then he took the trouble of demonstrating poorness in spirit, meekness and lowliness, what peacemaking, what loving your enemies, what righteousness was, who were the merciful, who the pure in heart—by circumstances we have had often to enumerate in the catalogue of his wonders vouchsafed to mankind. Committing and countenancing acts of pillage, disregarding the remonstrances, and putting the peaceably disposed inhabitants of the city into great bodily fear. Destroying property, injuring persons, desecrating holy places, and introducing disorder and tumult into a great public solemnity and congregation of people assembled at the passover. Breathing fire and sword, and resorting to bloodshed, when the magistrates resolved to put an end to this reign of terror. Whipping off the ear of an officer—to instruct us in passive obedience.

W. J. B.

PATERSON'S RECATANTION— THE SCOTCH GOD WAR.

I LAST week inserted the copy of a bill headed "Recantation of Thomas Paterson," which bill I received from Paterson, but without any comments upon it, and I thence concluded that it had been issued by himself, as I had previously received all his other bills in a similar way. I was certainly much struck by the correctness of the religious tone which prevailed throughout, all *double entendres*, all quiet, insidious sneers being carefully avoided—and I fancied how numbers of the god-believing inhabitants of Edinburgh would be gulled into the belief that Paterson had really recanted. But this week I learn that I was myself gulled, and that Paterson is no party to its circulation, though he writes me that he has laughed until his sides ache at the eagerness with which it has been purchased, and the implicit faith which is being placed

in it. He says, "Don't some of them wish it were true? My fortune is now made, you may depend, I am in hourly expectation of an offer of a place in the 'free church,' and it is no small puzzle to me, at this moment, whether to accept it or not. There has been upwards of 1000 of the recantations sold already, so I am told." As I certainly intended my readers to believe that Paterson had issued the said bill, this notice will set them right as to its origin.

Paterson, I understand, with the wish of his friends, will discontinue his agitation until, at least, after his trial—it being their opinion that he has done his work, and well done it. It must not be conceived that the shop will be closed, and no attempt made to take advantage of his labours—that the good seed which has been sown will be permitted to wither for want of attention and cultivation—far from it—the living waters will be dispensed with a bountiful hand by a *female*, intelligent and courageous, whose friendship I have the happiness to possess, and whose qualifications for the office I think I may answer for. She has hitherto resided in London, but is now either in Scotland, or on her road there.

It having been intimated to me that my remarks in No. 90 would lead to the impression that Paterson had been supported in his struggle by the public, I beg to say that the only assistance he has received has come from one or two private friends.

THE EDITOR.

The following is a portion of a letter, received from the secretary of the Scottish Anti-Persecution Union, which I take the liberty of publishing, although addressed to me privately:

"Within the last fortnight the troops under General Paterson have done much damage to the fortress of superstition—Scotch superstition, the most untameable of all superstitions. What with placarding the walls of the city, in all directions, with large bills, containing 'typical' tid-bits from holy writ—what with the general's heroism, in gallantly storming the town in person, on the morning of the 27th ult., distributing, with undaunted mien, powder and shot to every man in the enemy's camp—what with the rattling of the shot as it fell clanking into the letter-boxes of the city—as it wound into every area, and below every letter-boxless door in town, and as it stuck upon the window-shutters and doors of those of his enemies, who 'would not that he should reign over them'—what with these things, I say, and the subsequent capture and recovery of the general, this place has been kept, for the period I mention, in the most delightful state of fermentation, accelerated and kept up, no doubt, by the fine weather, which, in the

plenitude of his goodness, has been awarded us by the clerk in that department of divine government.

"To relinquish metaphor, the last act of the bigots in 'high places' was the apprehension of T. P. on Monday week last, and his confinement in Calton Gaol for 24 hours, until bail had been procured. The day after liberation, he and I crossed the Frith of Forth, to Kirkaldy, taking with us some hundred copies of the 'Home Thrust,' T. P.'s 'Advertisement,' and the 'Beauties of the Bible' bill, all of which we, in person, distributed to the barbarians roosting in that picturesque collection of mud and bricks. Seldom however do we traverse a desert without stumbling upon its oasis; and in this bog of mentality we did alight upon a few square feet of the green sod which reared its head above the slush of the quagmire from which it sprung, and there we unfurled the standard of liberty. The friends in Kirkaldy, though scanty in numbers, appear to be deeply imbued with correct notions, and to possess a right conception of principle. May their energy give birth to actions adequate to the strength of that conception!

"Since that date Paterson has been pursuing—I cannot call it the '*even*,' but the rough 'tenor of his way,' nothing having occurred to disturb that gentleman's equanimity (if anything *can* do so) up to this hour, barring the 'Recantation,' which, as a *recantation*, is good, but as a *ruse* will, in my opinion, prove a failure.

"The friends here are full of energy, activity, and enthusiasm—determined, in short, not to be *done*."

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

A STRETCH OF POWER.—We find from an Edinburgh paper, that the superintendent of police has been "very properly stretching the powers vested in him to the utmost," by suppressing certain placards in the streets. A police superintendent "on the stretch" must be a very remarkable agent; and it is to be hoped that in "stretching his powers to the utmost" he will not tear his uniform. We fancy we see the active functionary standing on tiptoe leaping up at the wall, and climbing the lamp-posts to get at, and pull down, offensive placards. This is the only manner in which we can conceive it possible for a police superintendent to be exercising his powers to the utmost stretch. We sincerely trust that the seams of his coat will stand this severe straining of the arm of authority.—*Pictorial Times*.

The following, from the pen of a talented, indefatigable, and honest advocate of unlimited freedom of discussion, and an un-

daunted defender of the deceived and oppressed millions—George Julian Harney—is copied from the *Northern Star*, and affords a pleasing contrast to the vituperation and abuse of the god-defending scribes of London and Edinburgh. But George Julian Harney is a chartist, and, as a consequence, a disbeliever in christianity, and his word will, of course, go for nothing with the followers of the seditious Jew:

Certain prosecutions for that undefined and undefinable offence called "blasphemy" are just now exciting no little interest in "Auld Reekie." The parties prosecuted are Messrs. Robinson and Finlay, and that now well-known character, "the Man Paterson." The two former were first arrested, and the shop of Robinson fairly gutted by the harpies of the law, while Robinson himself was most infamously treated; he being confined to his bed with illness at the time, was watched night and day by "filthy dungeon villains," who fairly took possession of his house. After such treatment, and after plundering him of his property, he was brought to trial, when it was found that, as in the case of the "fifty-nine conspirators," the indictment against him and Finlay was so wretchedly defective that it could not be sustained; the consequence was the *present acquittal of the defendants, and their being bound over on another warrant to meet another trial.* "The Man Paterson," expecting Robinson to be imprisoned, had come to Edinburgh to keep his shop. On Robinson being set at liberty, P. opened a shop of his own, and has since been engaged in constant war with the "authorities." Persons for posting his placards have been seized and sentenced to imprisonment, or held to bail; his shop has already once been entered, and everything therein taken away by the police thieves; and when I was in Edinburgh he was in daily expectation of another and a similar visit from the "guardians of public order." He is also under bail to appear (it is expected) in November. Of Mr. Finlay I know nothing, except that he bears the character, in Edinburgh, of an upright and clever man. Robinson I was personally acquainted with about eight years since, when we were both engaged in the struggle to establish an unstamped press; he had suffered a short imprisonment in Derby, for vending the unstamped publications, and on his removal to Glasgow, I took up his position in the former town, which position I maintained until I was myself condemned to six months' imprisonment for a similar offence. Robinson afterwards removed to Edinburgh, where he has for some years now filled the useful and honourable office of *liberal* bookseller of that city. "The Man Paterson," I have known for nearly two years. I first became acquainted with him at Sheffield, where he was assisting Mr. Holyoake, the socialist lecturer. Since that time Paterson has acquired no little notoriety by his famed shop in Holywell-street, and his battles with Hall and Jardine, the magisterial Solons of Bow-street. Persons unacquainted with Paterson would suppose him to be a monster, judging by the "fancy portraits" of him given by that veritable, many-headed monster, the London press. *I know him*—I know him in private life to be one of the best of men: his morality, self-denial, warmth of affection, and love of liberty, well entitle him to that character. Gentle as a child in private life, he is fierce and resolute as a lion in public life; and the Edinburgh champions of orthodoxy will find him an "ugly customer" to deal with.

PROSECUTIONS FOR BLASPHEMY.—The prosecution for blasphemy in Edinburgh has failed, the prosecutors having got up a bad case, and the spirit of the present expounders of the law being quite against this obsolete and ineffectual method of extinguishing heresy.—*Tyne Mercury*.

THE TABLES TURNED.

PERSECUTION IN MADEIRA.—IMPRISONMENT OF DR. KALLEY.—It is somewhat unusual for us, in these days of boasted liberty of opinion, to have to record the actual imprisonment of a servant of Christ for no other cause than that he was faithful in preaching the everlasting gospel. Yet it is true that Dr. Kalley, who, for four of five years, has been labouring among the benighted Portuguese in Madeira, ministering at once to their temporal and spiritual necessities, has been thrown into prison by the authorities of the island. Dr. Kalley is a Scotchman, a native, we believe, of Kilmarnock, and was ordained by the London Missionary Society, it being intended that he should proceed as medical missionary to China. Circumstances occasioned his detention at Madeira, and finding a door of usefulness opened there, he practised among the natives, and while he healed the body, he neglected not the immortal soul. His labours were followed by a very wondrous blessing. Thousands have listened to his ministrations, and on one occasion he addressed no fewer than between four and five thousand people, who had assembled from all quarters of the island to listen to the words of life. But the darkness of popery thus coming in contact with the light, could not rest till the light was quenched; and so the authorities, urged on by the priests, and, we believe, at the beck of the Romish nuncio, have thrown this witness for the truth into jail. The charge preferred against him is *blasphemy*, i.e. not adorning the virgin, and abetting apostacy and heresy. This matter bears a most serious aspect in a religious point of view, but most serious also in a political. May British subjects thus be imprisoned contrary to treaty, and by incompetent tribunals, as in Dr. Kalley's case? Is the honour of the British flag thus to be insulted, and no redress asked for? Britain is not yet surely so dead to the welfare of her subjects, so utterly indifferent to the cause of protestantism, as calmly to submit to an injury—a stain upon her fair banner, so deep as this. In the meantime, we are glad to see that measures are adopted for calling the attention of government to the matter, and that a public meeting is to be held in the Waterloo Rooms, on Monday evening, to sympathise with our suffering countryman, and memorialise her majesty's ministers on the subject.—*The Witness*.

ASSASSINATION.

To the Editor of the Oracle of Reason.

SIR.—“It is very amusing, at times, to observe,” in pen and paper warfare, that when one party gets rather the worst of it, he straightway loses his temper, descends to mere personal hypercriticism, if not abuse, and betrays a woful want of perspicacity, or otherwise of honesty, in garbling and misquoting his adversary's statements.

As you, Mr. Editor, have chosen to classify and fancifully describe *me*, pray accept the above statement of *your* case. With your permission, I will now proceed to reply to your strictures upon my letter, which, I conceive, are of so extraordinary a nature, as to call for a reply, most loudly. You begin by talking of my *antipathies*—but why, William Chilton, have I not as great right to express my *antipathies* as you your *sympathies*? For, after all the “words, words, words,” that have been wasted upon your side of the question, I maintain that I have adduced as good reasons for the one as

you for the other—not that I would contend that my reasoning is particularly good, but that yours is decidedly bad, and utterly inconclusive. But, however, you have just hit the mark, for my principal and immediate object really was to express *antipathy*, freshly excited by the editorial support given to W. J. B., in No. 86. I heard the *Oracle* damned because of its prostitution to the vile purpose of assassination, and felt anxious that, as a mere matter of *testimony*, all its supporters should not be classed together, as the abettors of would-be assassins.

I will stick to the *Oracle of Reason* through thick and thin, as long as you accord to me the privilege, as you have hitherto most fairly done, of being heard—but I could not help admitting, that instead of its present title, it might recently have been more justly styled, “*The Oracle of Felony, or Assassination and Petty Larceny Vindicated*.”

You complain that I have not kept to the question “as originally laid down,” but entered into “a desultory discussion of a general principle, which had not previously been mooted.” Now, upon reference to No. 78, I find the assassination principle thus broached, “Ireland would do well to begin by a systematic assassination of all the parsons in that country, beginning with the worst and proceeding to the best men, if they were obstinate enough to remain in the country.”

How far I have, or have not kept to the “question as originally laid down,” I will leave all impartial readers to judge. I submit, however, that I have made the principle no more *general* than W. J. B. had done, except in as much as I supposed, for argument's sake, its application to other states, than that of present Ireland, and to other parties beside the parsons of that country, adopting, certainly without a vast deal of consideration, the “argumentum ad absurdum,” and “ad hominem.”

As to noticing the so-called arguments that have been advanced to uphold *physical force in a less narrow sense than mere assassination*, I candidly tell you that I could not bring myself to think them worthy of notice.

They, *indeed*, shirk the question “as originally laid down,” and go completely “between the bark and the tree.” I would join any people in an appeal to fair and straightforward physical force, for the maintenance of liberty, although I still hold that not until physical force is entirely dispensed with, will there be any but the most remote prospect of the true regeneration of the world.

W. J. B.'s historical researches are doubtless very instructive, merely as such, but in the way of argument they amount to nothing—from historical considerations, he

THE ORACLE OF REASON.

might as well predicate that universal peace amongst nations never could be brought to pass, because, hitherto, almost every dispute had been settled by an appeal to arms, when it is an evident fact that amongst the most civilised nations, the ambassador is gradually filling the place of the warrior, and the pen superseding the sword. As well say, too, that because the world has hitherto not progressed without religion, it can never attain to universal atheism. W. J. B.'s line of argument is unworthy of him as an atheist—let him leave christians to grub up the history of past imperfections, endeavouring to show that, as we never have been perfect, so we never can be.

I retract the viper or other noxious reptile, for I don't think at the time I sufficiently considered whether I was uttering the simple truth. I do not mean to say, but that you *ought* to be avoided, mind me, if you are as bad as your advocacy of assassination would lead one to suppose, but, troth to say, I am not the man to avoid you, especially when you assure me that you are in the main, "harmless, good-natured fellows," and that I need be under no apprehension of being "popped at from behind a hedge," etc.

Give us your fist, William Chilton, and communicate my best wishes, in all jollity, to W. J. B.

I did not give "a new commandment," save for the especial adoption of yourselves, in the event of your objecting to the old one, therefore your facetiousness about my avoiding *myself* is quite thrown away. I am glad you are prepared to defend petty larceny, you therein display what I call a rare consistency.

You talk rather too fast, when you speak of my *assumption* that you were defending your opinions through a mere spirit of combativeness—I merely expressed a charitable *hope* that such was the case, and although you would have me believe to the contrary, your counter assumption evinces such a spirit plainly enough.

Towards the conclusion of your notice of my letter, you lay great stress upon the *arguments* adduced by W. J. B. and yourself—but what really tangible argument you have brought forward in defence of *assassination*, I really cannot discover—you set out and conclude with thinking such a course would be good policy, backing your opinion by historical precedents, not one of which can I see to be applicable, and by "speeches in parliament," Dan O'Connell's harangues, etc. If you will have the goodness to lay down some broad and intelligible principle, upon which you would defend your deeply cherished scheme, I shall be most willing to attack it, and "show reasons better than your reasons," in

the mean time, I must content myself with stating *my* opinion, that the policy of assassination is highly doubtful, and its position in the scale of morality, decidedly below zero.

The intention of my last letter was certainly not to go very deeply into the matter, any more than it is in this—I simply wished to assert the above opinion, and that if assassination was good, so was pocket-picking, or any other such rascality—and I must contend that it would have been much more to the purpose on your part, to have exposed the fallacy of these assumptions, than to have occupied space in your useless repetitions of what you are pleased to consider my grandiloquent language.

Your sentence, "Bombastic notions of states of society which have never yet been realised," forms at once, as being uttered by you in relation to me, a complete key to our respective idiosyncracies, and I consider that we represent two classes of atheists, about equally numerous, each serving to correct the other. You look *backward*—I look *forward*—you style me *visionary and cloud-clapt*—and I you, *short sighted and smoke-enveloped*. Look at the world as it is, eh? and, I suppose, imitate it—quarrel, fight, shoot, stab, rob, pilfer, and, finally, make fools of ourselves, and all because the world does so. No, whilst I look at the world as it is, I will not forego the contemplation of what it *might* be—and, as I hope, *will* be. Fare you well, Mr. Editor.

Your friend, in all honesty,

DIAGORAS ATHEOS.

P. S. Errata in your last No., page 294, second column, 22nd line from top, for "moral," read "glorious," 21st line from bottom, for "serpent," read "viper."

EXPLANATION.

WITH regard to the remarks under the head of "Final Reply to the Mistakes of G. J. H."—G. J. H. only thinks it necessary to say, that if the writer will refer to his gazetteer, he will find that a very good, substantial "Burnley" does exist in the Potteries, and no "mistake"—therefore G. J. H.'s "ought to be inference" does not "fall to the ground" while that town stands. There are *two* Burnleys, one in Lancashire, and one in the Potteries.

A MIRACLE DISCOVERED.—Our indefatigable exertions in the support of christianity is doubtless admitted on all hands—still we will add another proof of it in the following research into the miracle department. If the lord worked a miracle in taking up Mr. Elijah in a fiery chariot—did he not also work another, unless the old gentleman was scorched by his ride?

THEORY OF REGULAR
GRADATION.

XLIII.

(Lyell's Digest of Lamarck's Theory.)

"WE must here (says Mr. Lyell) interrupt the author's argument, by observing that no positive fact is cited to exemplify the substitution of some *entirely new* sense, faculty, or organ, in the room of some other suppressed as useless. All the instances adduced go only to prove that the dimensions and strength of members and the perfection of certain attributes may, in a long succession of generations, be lessened and enfeebled by disuse; or, on the contrary, be matured and augmented by active exertion, just as we know that the power of scent is feeble in the greyhound, while its swiftness of pace and its acuteness of sight are remarkable—that the harrier and stag-hound, on the contrary, are comparatively slow in their movements, but excel in the sense of smelling.

"We point out to the reader this important chasm in the chain of the evidence, because he might otherwise imagine that we had merely omitted the illustrations for the sake of brevity, but the plain truth is, that there were no examples to be found; and when Lamarck talks 'of the efforts of internal sentiment,' 'the influence of subtle fluids,' and the 'acts of organisation,' as causes whereby animals and plants may acquire *new organs*, he gives us names for things, and with a disregard to the strict rules of induction, resorts to fictions, as ideal as the 'plastic virtue,' and other phantoms of the middle ages.

"It is evident, that if some well authenticated facts could have been adduced to establish one complete step in the process of transformation, such as the appearance, in individuals descending from a common stock, of a sense or organ entirely new, and a complete disappearance of some other enjoyed by their progenitors, that time alone might then be supposed sufficient to bring about any amount of metamorphosis. The gratuitous assumption, therefore, of a point so vital to the theory of transmutation, was unpardonable on the part of its advocate.

"But to proceed with the system; it being assumed as an undoubted fact, that a change of external circumstances may cause one organ to become entirely obsolete, and a new one to be developed such as never before belonged to the species, the following proposition is announced, which, however staggering and absurd it may seem, is logically deduced from the assumed premises. 'It is not the organs, or, in other words, the nature and form of the parts of the body of an animal which have given rise to its habits, and its particular faculties, but on the contrary, its

habits, its manner of living, and those of its progenitors have in the course of time determined the form of its body, the number and condition of its organs, in short, the faculties which it enjoys. Thus otters, beavers, water-fowl, turtles, and frogs, were not made web-footed in order that they might swim; but their wants having attracted them to the water in search of prey, they stretched out the toes of their feet to strike the water and move rapidly along its surface. By the repeated stretching of their toes, the skin which united them at the base acquired a habit of extension, until in the course of time the broad membranes which now connect their extremities were formed.

"In like manner the antelope and the gazelle were not endowed with light agile forms, in order that they might escape by flight from carnivorous animals; but having been exposed to the danger of being devoured by lions, tigers, and other beasts of prey, they were compelled to exert themselves in running with great celerity, a habit which, in the course of many generations, gave rise to the peculiar slenderness of their legs, and the agility and elegance of their forms.

"The camelopard was not gifted with a long flexible neck because it was destined to live in the interior of Africa, where the soil was arid and devoid of herbage, but being reduced by the nature of that country to support itself on the foliage of lofty trees, it contracted a habit of stretching itself up to reach the high boughs, until its fore-legs became longer than the hinder, and its neck so elongated, that it could raise its head to the height of twenty feet above the ground."

"Another line of argument is then entered upon, in farther corroboration of the instability of species. In order it is said that individuals should perpetuate themselves unaltered by generation, those belonging to one species ought never to ally themselves to those of another; but such sexual unions do take place, both among plants and animals; and although the offspring of such irregular connexions are usually sterile, yet such is not always the case. Hybrids have sometimes proved prolific where the disparity between the species was not too great; and by this means alone, says Lamarck, varieties may gradually be created by near alliances, which would become races, and in the course of time would constitute what we term species.

"But if the soundness of all these arguments and inferences be admitted, we are next to inquire, what were the original types of form, organisation, and instinct, from which the diversities of character, as now exhibited by animals and plants, have been derived? We know that individuals which are mere varieties of the same species, would, if their pedigree could be traced back far

enough, terminate in a single stock; so according to the train of reasoning before described, the species of a genus, and even the genera of a great family, must have had a common point of departure. What then was the single stem from which so many varieties of form have ramified? Were there many of these, or are we to refer the origin of the whole animate creation, as the Egyptian priests did that of the universe, to a single egg?

"In the absence of any positive data for framing a theory on so obscure a subject, the following considerations were deemed of importance to guide conjecture.

"In the first place, if we examine the whole series of known animals, from one extremity to the other, when they are arranged in the order of their natural relations, we find that we may pass progressively, or at least with very few interruptions, from beings of more simple to those of a more compound structure; and in proportion as the complexity of their organisation increases, the number and dignity of their faculties increase also. Among plants a similar approximation to a graduated scale of being is apparent. Secondly, it appears from geological observations, that plants and animals of more simple organisation existed on the globe before the appearance of those of more compound structure, and the latter were successively formed at later periods: each new race being more fully developed than the most perfect of the preceding era.

"Of the truth of the last-mentioned geological theory, Lamarck seems to have been fully persuaded; and he also shows that he was deeply impressed with a belief prevalent amongst the older naturalists, that the primeval ocean invested the whole planet long after it became the habitation of living beings, and thus he was inclined to assert the priority of the types of marine animals to those of the terrestrial, and to fancy, for example, that the testacea of the ocean existed first, until some of them, by gradual evolution, were *improved* into those inhabiting the land.

"These speculative views had already been, in a great degree, anticipated by Delam  therie in his *Teliamed*, and by several modern writers, so that the tables were completely turned on the philosophers of antiquity, with whom it was a received maxim, that created things were always most perfect when they came first from the hands of their maker, and that there was a tendency to progressive deterioration in sublunary things when left to themselves—

— omnia fatis
In pejus ruere, ac retr   sublapsa referri.

"So deeply was the faith of the ancient schools of philosophy imbued with this doctrine, that to check this universal proneness

to degeneracy, nothing less than the re-intervention of the deity was thought adequate; and it was held, that thereby the order, excellence, and pristine energy of the moral and physical world had been repeatedly restored."

REVIEW.

The Political Scourge, Nos. 1 and 2.—
Southey, 40, Holywell-street.

THIS is a penny periodical, of the same size as the *Oracle*, exclusively intended, I presume, for the discussion of politics, and it certainly is more free from god-twaddle than such works usually are—but, as though it were impossible to disconnect politics from religion, and seemingly as though the *belief* in a just god was the foundation of morality, we have it said, "It is the acme of blasphemy to assert that god created man to endure torments so intense" as those suffered by the enslaved millions all over the world. If we can find no better reason for objecting to the present hellish system, than that god never intended such things to be, why we had better keep our breath to cool our broth—if we can get any to cool—for those who have power and wealth, those who tyrannise, those who plunder, are fully convinced that god did intend that such things should be, *or they would not be*. Those of our rulers who believe in a god, declare that those whom they rule are rebelling against god, when they oppose the authority of his servants here on earth—and what god-believer can object, with consistency, to this? It grieves me sorely to find well-intentioned men, and I am willing to believe the editor of the *Scourge* to be one, so grossly deceiving themselves and the public, and damning their cause, by declaring it to be opposed to the will of heaven that men should be enslaved, robbed, and murdered—when the fact stares us in the face that men *are* enslaved, robbed, and murdered, and ever will be so, until they claim justice upon other grounds than the will or wish of a god. Paine said, god did not make rich and poor, he only made men and women—who, in the name of common sense, did make rich and poor, then? If god does not wish rich and poor to exist—if he is opposed to the competitive state of society, of which rich and poor is a result—why the deuce does he not alter it? He is either a fool or a rogue—he does not see that it is wrong, or he won't alter it when he does see it.

The editor of the *Scourge*, with the usual inconsistency of religious politicians, has the following in the same article, p. 7:

"We see in the works of nature—in every thing that is uncontaminated by man—the utmost harmony of design; each part is

perfect for its purpose, that is, the formation of one stupendous whole! Had it been intended that one portion of the human family should labour for the sole enjoyment of the other; then would the adaptations of the producers be suited merely to that end—muscular power would be theirs—the faculty of construction—but they would be spared the finer feelings, which rise in rebellion against the tyranny they suffer from the drones of the hive, and which conduce most to mental misery.”

This arrant nonsense has been refuted a thousand times over, and has no claim to an answer—but I will just notice it. If man has contaminated any portion of the works of nature, or god, has he not been *permitted* to do it? has he not been *compelled* to do it? and does not this very contamination form a *part* of the “harmony of design” so evident to the *Scourge*, in the formation of the whole? and is it not, too, a “part *perfect* for its purpose?” The working slaves are “spared the finer feelings”—they do *not* “rise in rebellion against the tyranny they suffer,” for if they did—there would be no more tyranny. I would earnestly impress upon the editor of the *Scourge*, to keep his paper clear of theology, if he really wishes to emancipate his fellows—for GOD-BELIEF IS THE FOUNDATION OF ALL TYRANNY, and I would challenge any god-believer to bring forward a rational objection to the present, or any previous, or future state of society, taking the existence of a god, and the creation of the world by such god, as starting points.

There are some other matters in the work to which I should like to revert, but have not time—not, however, in condemnation, but merely in explanation of my views—I may return to the subject some future time.

As the theological portions of the work are comparatively insignificant in quantity, I would recommend its purchase and perusal to those who may see this notice. The editor's intentions are thus stated:

“Reader:—our title is indicative of our character—our journal shall be a scourge—a scourge of piercing point to the enemies of right.

“Neither the avowed opponents, or the disguised foes of salutary change shall escape its lash. Pretended friends shall be exposed—weak ones encouraged—apathetic ones aroused; and the ignorant, and selfishly-neutral taught their duty to themselves, their country, and to posterity.

“To all we submit this our opening number as a sample, and from all we expect support so long as our journal shall please them, and no longer. We will honestly express our own convictions, and will give free egress to those of others who may differ

from us:—we will, in short, to the best of our ability furnish to the friends of freedom a cheap and truthful organ, representing no clique or faction; but boldly advocating the rights of honest industry, and battling with tyranny in whatever shape it may present itself.

“The many and the few will alike be censured, when we think their conduct improper or unjust; for while we profess to enlighten, we should act inconsistent to conceal the faults, even of our friends.” W. C.

SUBSCRIPTIONS,

For the Anti-Persecution Union.

Mr. Rowell	£0	0	6
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						G. J. H. Sec.		

NOTICE.

The Anti-Persecution Union would be happy to receive the names of persons in town and country, who are willing to assist as collectors of subscriptions for those who are struggling for right against pious might.

G. J. H. Sec.

ERRATUM.—The 5s. acknowledged in the last *Oracle* as being received by Mrs. M. of W. J., did not belong to the Anti-Persecution Union, and was placed by mistake in their list of subscriptions.

C. D. is thanked for his attention—just in time.

NOTICE.

THE Next No. (93) of the ORACLE will be charged TWOPENCE, the extra Penny to be given to the LONDON ANTI-PERSECUTION UNION.

SOCIAL INSTITUTION, JOHN-ST.

A PUBLIC DISCUSSION will be held at the Social Institution, John Street, Tottenham Court Road, on Friday evening, September 15, at half-past eight, and probably on many succeeding Friday evenings. Subject “IS THERE A GOD?”

LIBRARY OF REASON.

Penny Numbers.

PART I., NOW READY, CONTAINS,

Price Sixpence,

- I. Superstition. By Plutarchus. With Preface by Wyttenbach.
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On October 1,
THE *FALLEN STAR*; or THE HISTORY OF A FALSE RELIGION.
By Sir E. L. Bulwer.

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Saturday, Sep. 16, 1843.

THE ORACLE OF REASON:

Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE."

First Editor—Charles Southwell, imprisoned for twelve months and fined £100, for Blasphemy in No. 4.
Second Editor—George Jacob Holyoake, imprisoned for six months, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.
Third Editor—Thomas Paterson, imprisoned for one month, for Blasphemous Placards, in London.
Vendors—George Adams, imprisoned for one month for selling No. 25, in Cheltenham; and Harriet Adams, his wife, arrested for selling No. 4, in the same town.

No. 93.]

EDITED BY WILLIAM CHILTON.

[PRICE 2D.

FOR THE BENEFIT
OF THE LONDON ANTI-PERSECUTION UNION.

MURDEROUS ATTACK UPON PATERSON AND JEFFERY, BY THE EDINBURGH CHRISTIAN SAVAGES.

Presbytery does but translate
The papacy, to a free state,
A common-wealth of popery,
Where ev'ry village is a see
As well as Rome, and must maintain
A tithe pig metropolitan:
Where every presbyter and deacon
Commands the keys for cheese and bacon
And ev'ry hamlet's governed
By's holiness, the church's head,
More haughty and severe in's place
Than Gregory and Boniface.
Such church must (surely) be a monster
With many heads: for if we conster,
What in th' apocalyps we find,
According to th' apostle's mind,
'Tis that the whore of Babylon
With many heads did ride upon;
Which heads denote the sinful tribe
Of deacon, priest, lay-elder, scribe.

Hudibras.

THE events of the past week have proved the Edinburgh christians—and they are a fair sample of the pack—to be the most inconsistent, cowardly, bloody-minded scoundrels unhung. Last week's *Oracle* contained an article extracted from the *Edinburgh Witness*, in which it was stated that a *public* meeting would be held in the Waterloo Rooms, in that city, to sympathise with Dr. Kalley, imprisoned by the Portuguese authorities of Madeira, on a charge of blasphemy, that is, in his case, preaching protestantism—the established religion of the country being catholic. On Monday, the 11th inst., the meeting took place, the Lord Provost in the chair. After Dr. Candlish, who seemed to be the lion of the party, had moved a resolution of sympathy, which was duly seconded, the following scene, according to the *Edinburgh Advertiser* of the next day, then took place:

"The motion was being put from the chair by the Lord Provost, when a person rose in the body of the room, and having mounted a chair, expressed his wish to be heard before the resolutions were agreed to. This was no other than Mr. Jeffery, a socialist lecturer; and as soon as he made his appearance, his supporters, who were scattered

about the room, urged him by cheers and exhortations to insist on his right to be heard. The Lord Provost, who on account of the noise could not be heard distinctly, was understood to say that those who had called the meeting were entitled to lay down the order of procedure, and he apprehended that Mr. Jeffery's claim to be heard was altogether out of order. This seemed only to increase the determination of Mr. Jeffery and his friends. The former, apparently with great vehemence and with violent gestures, declaimed against the impropriety and the one-sidedness of the proceedings, in not allowing ample discussion, while the great bulk of the meeting was calling with vociferous energy to turn him out. Mr. Jeffery raised his fist, seemingly in defiance of the loudly expressed determination to put him down. The great body of the hall was by this time densely crowded, and several ladies had almost fainted from the crush, combined with the fury which was beginning to show itself. The gentlemen on the platform, one after another, attempted to speak to order, and one after another gave it up in despair. Mr. Jeffery kept in his place, and, aided by his friends, continued their complaints of unfairness and one-sidedness at the top of their lungs, and they were in turn assailed with such storms of hisses and expressions of disapprobation as prevented any single sentence spoken on either side from being heard to an end. The general opinion among those on the platform was to adjourn, in the belief the opposition would continue, and baffle all attempts by the subsequent speakers to make themselves heard. The Rev. Mr. Robertson, who was to move the next resolution, attempted to do so, but his voice was drowned in yells and groans. After calm had been somewhat restored, Dr. Candlish came forward, and eventually was enabled to speak to the point of order. He thought they were all anxious to see the proceedings properly conducted. He thought also that it would not be denied that the meeting had a right to decide its own order. (Loud cries of "No, no," from the opposition.) Unquestionably any one might be permitted to speak to the resolutions before the meeting, but he submitted,

as a matter of fairness to those who had called it, that they should be first heard in support of the statements. Mr. Jeffery—You have already made your statements, and I wish to make mine. (Loud expressions of disapprobation.) Dr. Candlish would submit that the question whether the parties who had claimed to be heard, should be allowed to do so, was one which the meeting could decide. (Loud groans, and cries of “No, no,” from the opposition party.) The meeting seemed generally to approve of Dr. Candlish’s suggestion, but the noise instead of diminishing, increased more and more. Mr. Southwell, another socialist lecturer, made his way to the front of the platform, and addressed the Lord Provost, declaring him, after his partiality on that occasion, to be unfit to be chairman of a public meeting. His lordship, with a few others, in the midst of loud cries for the police, left the chair, in the direction of the platform door, but at the instigation of several individuals returned to their places. The noise at this time was as great as ever, and both parties appeared anxious for a calm, but how it was to be accomplished neither seemed to know. The police were at length seen emerging from the crowd in the passage, and making their way towards Mr. Jeffery, whom they apprehended and escorted out of the room, amidst the cheers of his supporters. The expectation was general that peace would now be restored, but Jeffery was no sooner gone, than Southwell took his place, and acted over again the same part. After another interval of dumb-show, the police re-entered and showed him the way to the door—in like manner, Paterson, the infidel bookseller, succeeded to the post of disturber-general, till also ejected. This put an end to the confusion; and after three-quarters of an hour had been spent in the clamour we have described, the meeting gradually returned to quietness and composure.”

On Tuesday, Jeffery and Paterson were brought before Sheriff Tait, on a charge of “committing a breach of the peace,” &c. and witnesses were called to support the allegation, all of whom endeavoured to establish that it was a *special*, and not a *public* meeting, and that, of course, the prisoners had no right to speak without the consent of the chairman. The following colloquy occurred between Mr. Henry Jeffery and the principal witness:

“Convener M’Lagan resumed—Was not near enough to hear what Jeffery said, but saw his actions; he was using his arms as if insisting on being heard. The noise was so great that he could not hear what the provost said, but understood him to say that it was a *special* meeting called for a *special* purpose. Could not tell what Jeffery was

going to say, did not see Paterson at all.—Mr. Jeffery: Did the provost say it was a public meeting?—Witness: *He said it was a special meeting.*—Prisoner: Did you hear the grounds on which the provost said he would not hear me?—Witness: No; but I understood it was because it was a *special meeting*. I did not hear a word you said at all.—In answer to another question, witness said that he observed a great feeling of dissatisfaction manifested towards Jeffery *by those on the platform.*”

And who were those on the platform? Why the well-paid liars of the church—the black slugs, as Cobbett appropriately calls them—the venomous, blackhearted crew who are ever found crowding the chief places, where aught is to be gained or villany perpetrated. The priests, of course, who are so deeply interested in the suppression of all opinions but those by which they live, were the most violent in their endeavours to prevent Jeffery being heard—and, it would seem from the witness, were nearly the only persons present who acted so contemptibly. Three-fourths of the meeting consisted of females—who, unfortunately, are ever to be found following in shoals in the wake of their spiritual pastors, often to the neglect of their duties as mothers, wives, and neighbours. Their heavenly teachers fear the influence of reason upon the benighted minds of their dupes—the priests know the naturally unsuspecting nature of woman, and the readiness with which she believes the fables they pour into her ear, a guarantee that she would as readily believe the truth, if presented to her in a clear light—priests feel this, and never fail to raise their hellish war-whoop when there is a chance of common sense being spoken in the ears of those they have marked for their prey. Oh the oily knaves! the rugged villains! the smooth-tongued bullies! the smiling murderers! the two-faced hypocrites! the brazen-faced plunderers! the shameless demoralisers of humanity!—happy and glorious will be the day when the damnable craft by which they live shall no longer find supporters throughout the length and breadth, and height and depth of this fair earth!

But to return—the burden of the evidence was that it was a *special*, or *private* meeting, and not a public one, as announced in the *Witness*, of September 9, a copy of which my friends fortunately sent me, and I here insert it:

“Persecution in Madeira. Imprisonment of Dr. Kalley. A public meeting will be held on Monday evening, the 11th inst., at seven o’clock, in the Waterloo Rooms, for the purpose of expressing sympathy with Dr. Kalley, who has been imprisoned for preaching the gospel in Madeira, and also to memorialise government in his behalf.”

Was there ever a pack of more barefaced, lying, swindling, thieving villains, than these presbyterian christians? Not content with belying their own advertisement, and most shamefully refusing to hear those of opposite opinions to themselves, in support of a general principle—they made a *murderous attack* upon the objectionable parties, and but for the great exertions of the police, would have succeeded in their object. Paterson says, “I went last night to a public meeting, not thinking of taking any part, but as Jeffery and Southwell were taken to the police office, I at once took their places, and stood my ground until I was bundled neck and crop from the form, and also taken to the police office—but ere I left the meeting, my name got wind, and the whole fury of bigotry was let loose upon me, and I did not get out till my head was broken in two places, and the blood streaming from them. Southwell was liberated at the door, but Jeffery and me were taken in charge—to day our cases came on, when, after some fun, we were put off till the 19th of October. Now do you see bigotry in its true light.”

In another letter he says, “I was struck several tremendous blows when it was discovered who I was—one blow brought the blood copiously from my head, and I now walk about with it patched up.”

As soon as the supporters of Dr. Kalley called the public meeting at the Waterloo Rooms, the Scottish Anti-Persecution Union issued the following bill, and Messrs. Jeffery and Southwell attended to support the principle of non-persecution :

“Persecution of Dr. Kalley in Madeira.—The Scottish Anti-Persecution Union having been formed for the sole purpose of supporting those who are persecuted for expressing, or otherwise publishing, their opinions, and being neither a party engine, nor struggling for party or sectarian purposes—cannot stand idly by while a fellow-creature suffers for opinion’s sake; the members of that union therefore call upon parties of all denominations—presbyterians, episcopalians, catholics, unitarians, atheists, and others, to unite with them in expressing sympathy for Dr. Kalley, lately incarcerated by the authorities of Madeira for the indefinable offence of blasphemy.”

Surely there was no crime against morality in this act—no, but there was against religion—demoralising, bestialising, brutalising religion, the most hellish invention of the most hellish monster that ever strove to make a hell of this earth.

As I shall have occasion to return to this subject in future numbers, I shall conclude for the present with another extract from the police proceedings, as reported in the

Caledonian Mercury, and which will require no comments to explain :

“Jeffery—(to the sheriff)—Nothing was stated by me in opposition to the resolution. The chairman did not hear me, and could not know what I was going to say. Paterson—(to the sheriff)—If the bill had stated that the meeting was one of the friends of Dr. Kalley, I would not have gone; but it was called as a public meeting, and therefore I thought I had a right to go there. John Gunn, a police officer, deposed that Jeffery invariably interrupted the gentlemen on the platform, when they attempted to speak. He would not allow any one to speak but himself. Observed a *strong bad feeling* against Jeffery by the people in the room. In reply to a question by Jeffery, witness said—*If I had not protected you, you would have been ill used.* Prisoner—Well, I dare say the *christians* would have used me that way—but I had a sufficient number of friends to protect me. In reply to another question, witness said—I did not observe you hooting or cheering, but only attempting to speak; and you made motions by holding up your hands. Another police officer deposed that he was called in to apprehend Jeffery. Could not say if he was desired to cease speaking that others might be heard. Did not see Paterson. James Williamson, police officer, was called in, in consequence of the great disturbance in the Waterloo Rooms. Saw Jeffery standing on a form, talking away at a great rate. Heard shouting, bawling, and hissing, with cries of ‘put him out,’ ‘down with the socialist,’ &c. The noise was so great that witness could not hear what was said by the chairman or any one else. Jeffery stood up full half an hour. The general wish of the meeting was, that he should not be heard. Judged so from the cries of ‘put him out.’ Another police officer deposed, that he saw Paterson get up, but could not hear what he said. Assisted taking him out, *when he (Paterson) was struck by some one in the crowd.* Before Paterson accompanied the officers, he gave three cheers, and waved his hand to some one in the gallery. Paterson—(pointing to two scars on his head)—said, no one interfered to protect me from the tender mercies of the *christians*? Witness—I saw no one do so. Another officer deposed, that so great was the crowd after the prisoners, *that it required assistance to take them out.* No opposition was made by the prisoners to the officers. Paterson said, that he went to the meeting to vindicate the freedom of opinion and the freedom of worship.”

Hamilton the bill-poster was also brought up at the same time, and was fined 20s. for attempting a rescue, which was immediately paid.

W. C.

Mr. Jeffery addressed a meeting of 5000

persons, on Glasgow-green on Sunday, Sep. 10. The week before he was obliged to retire beyond the police bounds, but on this occasion he was determined to try the question, and was successful.

The following has been received by the secretary of the London Anti-Persecution Union, from the secretary of the Scottish Anti-Persecution Union:

"You will have received my last long ere this. The bill then enclosed intimated a meeting to-night in the Waterloo Rooms. The platform was *filled* with clerical humbugs. The first resolution was proposed by Dr. Candlish, to which an amendment was moved by Jeffery. The uproar was *tremendous*. Upwards of 1200 of the *elite* occupied the hall. *Females* in the proportion of four to one of the male sex. You may therefore *imagine* the scene. Candlish spoke to order. Southwell replied in a *masterly* style—a style which quite dumbfounded both 'sheep and shepherds.' Oh to god you'd been present!

"Southwell finished—Jeffery attempted to go on with his speech—ladies fainted—fanatics yelled—priests shouted in vain—the chairman barked—policemen rushed to the *melee*, seized Jeffery and Southwell, dragged them from the room amidst 'execrations horrible,' and, at the instance of the Lord Provost, they are pledged to appear at one to-morrow before the bar of the police court, to answer the charge of 'disturbing the harmony (?) of the meeting!'

"God forgive me! I omit, almost, to mention that 'Paterson'—the 'Man Paterson'—was also collared by the mastiffs of the law, for attempting to open his 'hellish' mouth. Paterson is a noble fellow! The police, however, thought differently, and treated him with much roughness.

"There is another case yet—Hamilton, of 'bill-sticking' notoriety has been summoned to appear at the same time as the others, for attempting a rescue. This is the reward of a virtuous impulse!"

ASSIST! ASSIST! ASSIST!

THE ANTI-PERSECUTION UNIONS.

I HAVE on several occasions called upon the public, and the readers of the *Oracle* to assist with might and main the Anti-Persecution Unions' defence of our liberties, and battle for our withheld rights, and this week an opportunity is afforded *all who are desirous*, of doing so without fear of disclosure. Those who can afford it, should purchase *additional* copies, and distribute them amongst those who are not in the practice of seeing it. The number is an excellent one for circulation, and, independent of other considerations, well worth the money. These are no times to be

over modest—if we don't speak the truth of ourselves, there is no one will speak it for us—and I make bold to say, that the claims of the *Oracle* to support are equal, if not superior, to any other infidel publication in the market. If the *Oracle* is well supported, the cause it advocates will also be supported, for the interests of the one are identical with the interests of the other—and the proprietors of this paper would be happy to give the whole of the profits upon its sale to the unions, whenever it produces a profit. But, profit or loss, it will abide its time, and the shame rest on those who permit it to decline.—ED.

(Copy of a letter, referred to by G. J. H., in his speech at the public meeting, City-road.)

To Dr. Kalley, Prisoner for Blasphemy,
Madeira.

40, Holywell-street, Strand, London,
Sep. 12, 1843.

Dear Doctor. — The Anti - Persecution Union of London have heard of your unjust imprisonment with great regret.

The distance between you and them makes no diminution in their sympathy. They condole with the victims of religious oppression in every clime.

It is enough for the union to know that you are imprisoned for expressing theological opinions, to establish your claim to their protection. According to the Scotch newspaper, the *Witness*, your alleged offence is against the mother of god. Mother or father, it makes no difference to the Anti-Persecution Union, they contend for every man's right to express his opinions on these parties, unchecked by any power but the power of opinion.

It may console you to know that the union will not censure you for having gone "too far," or condemn you for having been too rash. They chill you not with the cant of pseudo-liberalism about your shocking people's prejudices, or violating their feelings. They hold your feelings, and your prejudices to be as sacred as those of your oppressors! Nor will the union treat you as your own brethren in this country, and Scotland, are now treating persons in your condition. The union will not stigmatise you as a wretch, brand you as a miscreant, and hold you up to public execration—put you without the pale of human sympathies, and call upon the authorities to put you without the pale of the legal protection.

On the contrary the union offer you their hearty support, and beg to know, if possible, per return of post, in what manner they can best serve you.

They enclose you two addresses put forth by the union, which will serve to guide your decision—and they are happy to add the Scottish Anti-Persecution Union have already

dy put forth an appeal to the public on your behalf.

Signed on behalf of the London Anti-Persecution Union,

JACOB HOLYOAKE, Secretary.

THEORY OF REGULAR GRADATION.

XLIV.

(Lyell's Digest of Lamarck's Theory.)

"But when the possibility of the indefinite modification of individuals descending from common parents was once assumed, as also the geological generalisation respecting the progressive development of organic life, it was natural that the ancient dogma should be rejected, or rather reversed; and that the most simple and imperfect forms and faculties should be conceived to have been the originals whence all others were developed. Accordingly, in conformity to these views, inert matter was supposed to have been first endowed with life; until, in the course of ages, sensation was superadded to mere vitality: sight, hearing, and other senses, were afterwards acquired; and then instinct and the mental faculties; until, finally, by virtue of the tendency of things to *progressive improvement*, the irrational was developed into the rational.

"The reader, however, will immediately perceive, that if all the higher orders of plants and animals were thus supposed to be comparatively modern, and to have been derived in a long series of generations from those of more simple conformation, some further hypothesis became indispensable, in order to explain why, after an indefinite lapse of ages, there were still so many beings of the simplest structure. Why have the majority of existing creatures remained stationary throughout this long succession of epochs, while others have made such prodigious advances? Why are there still such multitudes of infusoria and polypes, or of *confervæ* and other cryptogamic plants? Why, moreover, has the process of development acted with such unequal and irregular force on those classes of beings which have been greatly perfected, so that there are wide chasms in the series; gaps so enormous, that Lamarck fairly admits we can never expect to fill them up by future discoveries?

"The following hypothesis was proposed to meet these objections. Nature, we are told, is not an intelligence, nor the deity, but a delegated power—a mere instrument—a piece of mechanism acting by necessity—an order of things constituted by the supreme being, and subject to laws which are the expressions of his will. This nature is *obliged*

to proceed gradually in all her operations; she cannot produce animals and plants of all classes at once, but must always begin by the formation of the most simple kinds; and out of them elaborate the more compound, adding to them successively, different systems of organs, and multiplying more and more their number and energy.

"This nature is daily engaged in the formation of the elementary rudiments of animal and vegetable existence, which correspond to what the ancients termed *spontaneous generations*. She is always beginning anew, day by day, the work of creation, by forming monads, or 'rough draughts' (*ébauches*), which are the only living things she ever gives birth to *directly*.

"There are distinct primary rudiments of plants and animals, and *probably* of each of the great divisions of the animal and vegetable kingdoms. These are gradually developed into the higher and more perfect classes by the slow, but unceasing agency of two influential principles: first, *the tendency to progressive advancement* in organisation, accompanied by greater dignity in instinct, intelligence, &c.; secondly, *the force of external circumstances*, or of variations in the physical condition of the earth, or the mutual relations of plants and animals. For as species spread themselves gradually over the globe, they are exposed from time to time to variations in climate, and to changes in the quantity and quality of their food; they meet with new plants and animals which assist or retard their development, by supplying them with nutriment, or destroying their foes. The nature also of each locality is in itself fluctuating, so that even if the relation of other animals and plants were invariable, the habits and organisation of species would be modified by the influence of local revolutions.

"Now, if the first of these principles, *the tendency to progressive development*, were left to exert itself with perfect freedom, it would give rise, says Lamarck, in the course of ages, to a graduated scale of being, were the most insensible transition might be traced from the simplest to the most compound structure, from the humblest to the most exalted degree of intelligence. But in consequence of the perpetual interference of the *external causes* before mentioned, this regular order is greatly interfered with, and an approximation only to such a state of things is exhibited by the animate creation, the progress of some races being retarded by unfavourable, and that of others accelerated by favourable, combinations of circumstances. Hence, all kinds of anomalies interrupt the continuity of the plan, and chasms into which whole genera or families might be inserted, are seen to separate the nearest existing portions of the series."

PUBLIC MEETING OF THE ANTI-PERSECUTION UNION, CITY ROAD, LONDON.

Sep. 12, 1843.

G. KNAPP Esq., chairman, opened the proceedings. He said he would do all in his power to protect the free publication of opinion. Had not men been erroneously trained, they would not have fallen into the gross error of allowing opinion to be interfered with. The province of the government was to protect, not to prevent, the free publication of opinion. The church must be separated from the state. The state cared nothing for opinion. He deemed high moral character necessary in all great struggles, and he knew that in struggles for truth this was certain to be found. Philosophy was always free from immorality. The state protected theology to impose on the masses, and the public were therefore indebted to the men who were labouring for their liberty. Cant and delusion had its funds to fall back upon, and he hoped that philosophy would soon have permanent funds for its dissemination and protection, and he hoped that the Anti-Persecution Union would be able to effect this. After many other highly valuable remarks, he called on gentlemen present to move the resolutions.

Mr. HOLYOAKE gave a rapid sketch of the arrest, robbery, and indictments of Messrs. Finlay, Robinson, and Paterson. He said, that Mr. Paterson, in his Scottish placard war, had found many spirited volunteer bill-stickers, men who, in every sense, stuck fast to the saints. When the police removed the bills they pasted, they took out glue pots and glued them up. Some one put out a "recantation," professing that Mr. Paterson had turned christian. This production the gullible bought up with avidity. He believed that Mr. Paterson intended applying to the magistrates for redress, on account of the injury done his character, by it being said that he had turned christian. Mr. H. then introduced the case of Dr. Kalley, who has been imprisoned in Madeira, for taking theological liberties with the virgin Mary, and read a letter* which he had that day sent to the doctor, offering him the union's assistance. Mr. H. then spoke to the resolution. He had received that morning a letter from Mr. Finlay, from which he learned that a Rev. Mr. Grey had called on the authorities to put Mr. Finlay down, on the ground that he insulted his father—meaning god—by exhibiting in his window one of Mr. Carlile's engravings of the bible god. Diderot had asked if the god of Moses, Joshua, and David, could be an honest man, and the Rev. Mr. Grey and others, should remember that

any decent man would feel insulted by being told that the god of the bible was his father. The Edinburgh papers called Mr. Paterson's placards obscene, but the placards were verbatim from the bible, and therefore the bible was declared obscene. It was said that Mr. Paterson provoked the authorities. But Mr. P. only published his sentiments as christians published theirs, and were not christians bent on injustice we should not hear of their being provoked by another man declaring his free thoughts. Was it to rest at that? was the discharge of a sacred duty to be held as a provocation of pious cruelty? Some said Mr. Paterson *attacked* prejudices. He (Mr. H.) denied it. Religion attacked Mr. P. and every man in his cradle. Mr. P. was only defending himself, by exposing christianity's pernicious poison. Others called Mr. P. violent. Let such persons read the Edinburgh papers. In them Mr. P. was stigmatised by every opprobrious epithet. He (Mr. H.) would say, let the aversion of violence be heaped on the oppressor, not the oppressed. Let brutal persecutors first be put down. He moved:

"That this meeting is of opinion, that the present prosecutions of atheists in Edinburgh, is an unjustifiable outrage upon public decency, and moral justice."

Mr. SAVAGE, jun., would raise his voice on behalf of his northern brethren. No tyranny was so detestable as that sought to be set up by the imprisonment of the Scottish victims. London should be well agitated, and all men up and doing. The atheist was placed without the pale of society—in no court could he obtain justice—this should be changed. He approved a placard war, and valued its effects highly. He would second the resolution.

(To be continued)

SUPERSTITION.

(From an Unpublished Play, by John Wade Clinton.)

BLOOD-GIRDLED superstition!
Slaughter is ever with thee, and the groans
Of innocents, mount shrieking up to heaven!
Thy god hath never been pure nature's god!*
Thy votaries have bowed their pliant necks
To images of blood; thy altar piece
Hath been erected in the gloomy cell,
And the fierce flame hath been thy oracle!
The sacrifices to thy demon wrath,
Have not been chosen from the common herd;
Glorious intelligence, and peerless worth—
Spirits! who flung aside conventional
Degrees, and suffered the rude, ribald jest
With gentleness, for man's regeneration,
'Tis these, that have been crushed beneath the
wheels,
Of this blood chariot of Juggernaut!

A PIOUS CONUNDRUM.—What is the difference between the Jews who took the city of Jericho and George Robins? Answer. They *puffed* an establishment down, and George Robins puffs such places up.

* See page 324.

* Query, whose god is?

GODOLOGY.

There are no gods but gods—there is no god but god.—FACT.

GODOLOGY in general, means discourse about gods in general—godology in particular, means discourse about some particular god—the particular god of the christians, to wit.

THE GOD OF THE CHRISTIANS IS

A GOD who raised up enemies that he might conquer them—made promises that he might break them—caused diseases that he might cure them—and set his favourite people a whoring after other gods, that he might butcher them.

A GOD who *was* before time *was*—cogitating before there was anything to cogitate about—made the universe before there was anything to make it from—and *did* before there was anything to *do*.

A GOD who formed man after his own image, though his own image had *no* form—created an author of all evil, though not himself the author of any evil—and caused his creatures to commit the most abominable crimes, and suffer the intensest agonies, though not himself the cause either of criminality or agony.

A GOD who saw that the work he had performed was very good, yet presently discovered it was very bad—foreknew that man would sin, yet was indignantly astonished that he did sin—foreknew that the forbidden apple would be eaten, yet damned the whole human race because it was eaten.

A GOD who, though always in all places, occasionally came down from heaven, just to see how the world wagged—though always of the same opinion, occasionally changed his mind—though always in good temper, occasionally in a thundering passion—though always merciful to perfection, occasionally murdering millions of innocent beings—and though without parts, did upon a particular occasion show his hinder parts.

A GOD so deceptive as to send upon his people “strong delusions,” that they might believe a lie—so silly as to suffer himself to be “checkmated by the devil”—so beastly that his “express image,” the right reverend Bishop of Clogher, was purity itself, when compared with him—and so atrociously cruel that no human tyrant could ever equal him in brutal wickedness.

A GOD whose presence would make a hell of heaven—whose virtues are vices—whose reasons would disgrace an idiot—whose laws would shock a savage—whose fickleness provokes derision—whose whole character is a horrible compound, “an intense concentration” of the worst vices which have stained the worst human natures.

This is the god of orthodox godologists! CHRISTIANS! BEHOLD HIM! Behold that

ALL-WISE BLUNDERER,

whomade man upright, yet could not keep him so—made the devil, yet could not controul him—made all things pure, yet could not preserve them from corruption—that

ALL-POWERFUL SAVAGE,

who damned countless millions, for the innocent error of an individual—destroyed by deluge “every living soul,” because of their wickedness, except a few living souls, who begat a second race as wicked as the first—provided an eternal heaven for the fools who accept, and an eternal hell for the wise who reject, his “holy gospel”—that

DIVINE BLOCKHEAD,

who, after hegetting himself upon somebody else, sent himself to be mediator between himself and everybody else—and after being spurned, derided, cursed, hated, laughed at, spat at, scourged, and nailed upon the cross, like a “dead rat upon a barn door,” got himself decently buried, as preliminary to mounting once more to the right hand of himself, from whence he shall come to judge the “quick and dead,” when there shall be neither quick nor dead—that

MONSTER TYRANT,

whose history should be written in blood, for it is a bloody history—whose name inspires disgust, for it is the name of an imaginary fiend—and whose religion should be universally execrated, for it is a religion of horror.

Away, then, with christian godology—away with the god *invented* by priests of the “bloody faith,” who, without their IM-MENSE NOTHING, to explain EVERY-THING would no longer be permitted to feast luxuriously, while millions starve patiently—to laud poverty, while revelling in splendour—to preach humility while practising pride—but would be hurled to perdition by regenerate humanity.

Away, then, with the ATROCIOUS TRINITY—BUTCHER GOD—BASTARD SON—and VOLUPTUOUS GHOST.

Away with all such BRUTALISING PHANTASMS—in whose name your priests rule with a rod of iron—oppress and persecute, upon the principle that the oppressed and persecuted in this world shall by those PHANTASMS be made happy in the next—in whose name they settle unsettleable disputes, by “hell and damnation proof”—fit us for heaven, by unfitting us for earth—make us wise unto salvation, by making us foolish unto destruction—purify our thoughts, by teaching us that we cannot possibly think a good thought—and exalt our courage, by denouncing terrible punishments upon those who do not “fear god with trembling”—in whose name your priests damn to “lowest depths of hell” the scoffers at their soul-saving doctrines, the exposers of their body-

plundering practices, and the despisers of their sanctified humbug.

Such is orthodox godology, that curse of curses. Down with it! for though last *invented*, it is first in *wickedness*. Let christian *priests* alone, but pull down their *craft*, for when *that* falls *they* fall into eternity's bottomless pit.

THOMAS PATERSON.

BRONTERRE O'BRIEN'S LECTURES ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

EVERY one of the *Oracle* readers in London should attend the course about to be commenced on this subject at the Rotunda rooms. Bronterre is one of the very few men who goes to the foundations of the causes of existing oppressions. He is a social, as well as a political, radical, and without this combination all public agitation of questions affecting the interests of our fellows, is, to use a favourite phrase of the lecturer's, "humbug." The fit of blowing up he occasionally takes against us "atheistical socialist lecturers" is spice or seasoning to his strong, wholesome fare; and I have had, on one occasion, to throw his own pepper in his face. He, however, never spares the mere money-grubber and pseudo-liberal "profit-monger," and for this I can almost forgive him for tilting against the atheists of the French revolution. The abhorrrers of Robespierre are bound to listen to his vindication by the only public man in this country who has dared to come forward openly for this purpose.

By the by, the features of Robespierre are strikingly called to mind by those of Holyoake. Other similarities I do not pretend to discover. I think those who compare the model of the face in the "chamber of horrors" at Tussaud's wax-work exhibition will remark the resemblance.

Monday evening, at half-past eight, he commences his discourse, and he does not object to any animadversions. M.Q.R.

NOTICE.

Received.—"Oracle Policy," by C. Dent, and Report of the John-street Discussion.

SUBSCRIPTIONS.

For the London Anti-Persecution Union.

Thomas Whiting, Esq., Bristol ..	£0 10 0
R. W., ditto	0 10 0
S. W., ditto	0 5 0
C. E., ditto	0 1 0
G., ditto	0 1 0
Collection at City Road, London ..	0 12 6
Sale of Trials	0 2 0
W. Newnham	0 1 0
Mr. Park, Collector	0 8 0
W. Talbert, Birmingham	0 2 6

G. J. H., Sec.

HYMNS FOR THE MILLION—No. 1.

POOR JESUS CHRIST.

Air, "Poor Mary Anne."

HERE upon a gallows hangeth,
Poor Jesus Christ!
He who all impostors hangeth,
Poor Jesus Christ!
Now, his mother *was* a virgin,
All our sins he was a purgin',
When he got a proper scourgin'.
Poor Jesus Christ!

"Lord (he cried), O save my bacon!"
Poor Jesus Christ!
"Father, why hast thou forsaken
Poor Jesus Christ?"
Then an earthquake rent the stitches
Of the world; without their breeches
Rose the saints—sad sons of bitches!
Poor Jesus Christ!

Some cast lots to get his garment:
Poor Jesus Christ!
Lord! the thing was full of varmint:
Oh, Jesus Christ!
Don't forget his cross and passion;
How he wept in bloody fashion;
How his legs escaped a smashin':
Poor Jesus Christ!

He, he said, came down to suffer:
Poor Jesus Christ!
So they crucified the buffer:
Poor Jesus Christ!
Pontius Pilate was the gory
Cove, who sent this cock to glory:
Is n't it a likely story?
Poor Jesus Christ!

J.C.

Any sums forwarded as under, will be acknowledged in the *Oracle*:

ADDRESSES.—Mr. Southwell, 46, West Register-street, Edinburgh.

Messrs. Robinson, booksellers, Greenside-street, ditto.

Thomas Finlay, Haddington-place, ditto.

T. Paterson, 38, West Register-street, ditto.

PUNCH says, that at the meeting of the British Association at Cork, "Professor Ludduffyddy read an ingenious paper on the probable length of the whiskers of the aborigines of ancient Jericho." Could not the learned professor favour us with an essay on the probable strength of lungs possessed by the Jews, who blew down the walls of that city with trumpets?

The newspapers say that, *after church on Sunday*, Lord William Paget was a witness to the *woman taken in adultery*, in the person of his own wife with Lord Cardigan. This is scripture and example with a vengeance.

Printed and Published by WILLIAM CHILTON, No. 40 Holywell-street, Strand, London.

Saturday, Sep. 23, 1843.

THE
ORACLE OF REASON:
Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE."

First Editor—Charles Southwell, imprisoned for twelve months and fined £100, for Blasphemy in No. 4.

Second Editor—George Jacob Holyoake, imprisoned for six months, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.

Third Editor—Thomas Paterson, imprisoned for one month, for Blasphemous Placards, in London.

Vendors—George Adams, imprisoned for one month for selling No. 25, in Cheltenham; and

Harriet Adams, his wife, arrested for selling No. 4, in the same town.

No. 94.]

EDITED BY WILLIAM CHILTON.

[PRICE 1D.]

**WHAT A MAN MAY BE—
AND YET BE A CHRISTIAN.**

I.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the father of lights, with whom is NO VARIABleness, neither shadow of turning.—*Jew Book.*

I CAN well remember when I first began to reason, when I first began to dispute, and to utter my doubts, that my mother used to say, "Ah, William, it is no use talking, there cannot be morality without religion. Religion is the very foundation of morality. What folly it is for you to go on as you do—wiser men than ever you will be have acknowledged the same." Now this argument is, I know, very extensively used by fathers and mothers to their children, in too many instances, unfortunately, with advantage. I am very happy to think that it did not prevail with me. My mother, though she believed herself to be a christian, was not a bigot, and readily admitted that she thought all good men, whether mohammedans, hindoos, or pagans, would be saved as well as christians—but imagined that the christians would be preferred to all the rest.

The morality said to be contained in the christian religion, and to form an essential part of it, is asserted to be the purest code in existence. Much difference of opinion exists upon this point, and a vast deal has been said and written upon the subject. I do not intend upon the present occasion to show what has been the *practice* of christians, acting under the influence of their pure morality, but simply intend to show what conduct will conform with christianity, and what a man may be, and yet be a christian.

The god of the christians, as well as of the Jews, is Jehovah—and although the christians profess that they shall be saved through the mediation of Christ, yet they admit that Jehovah is the "king of kings," the "lord of lords," the equal, if not the superior, of Christ, whose servant and ambassador Christ was during his human incarnation.

Among the attributes, or qualities given

by the christians to their god, is that of infinite justice and immutability, or unchangeableness—that is to say, such conduct as was considered by him virtuous and moral at any one period in man's history, or his own history, must ever be virtuous and moral to all eternity, for he is "without variableness or shadow of turning." This I take to be indisputable, for as Blount says, "To make any law the law of god, strictly taken (for in some sense every law that tends to the temporary convenience of or good of a people is so) it must have one quality, that is *inseparable from the nature of god*, and (by consequence) of his acts, namely, *immutability*—that is, it must be founded in nature, and always the same. So that what was the law of god in the time of Abraham, could not cease to be so, or at least be opposite to his law, *in our time*; and what god plainly and openly espoused in the time of Abraham, cannot but be supposed to be according to his law." I used the same argument in No. 54, when advising the christians to "Rifle, rob, and murder all infidels, whether deists or atheists"—urging that "What was good in the eyes of a *never-changing* god six thousand years since, must be good now." I had not then seen Blount, but from this coincidence of opinion, trifling though it be, I draw this conclusion—that the reasonableness of the deduction is so palpable, that it is only necessary to be presented to the mind to be adopted.

But if it be possible that there exists a christian so dead to shame, or so impervious to reason, as to withhold a ready assent to the previous proposition—why, may I ask, should christians demur to the use of the same principle, in judging of the moral acts of their god, which they so readily apply to his physical actions? If they contend that the same chemical affinities which operate now, operated at the time of Adam, and that they must ever continue the same, so long as the world is composed of its present materials—why do they, or, rather, why should they, hesitate to grant the conclusion, naturally flowing from such a premise, namely, that the author, contriver, and deviser of such unchangeable principles, must be himself unchangeable? Besides, men 6000 years ago,

or 60,000 years ago, were similarly organised to those of the present day, *if they were men*, and were subject to the same material influences that we are, and the laws which would produce morality and happiness then, would, as general principles, produce it now, and *vice versa*.

I have devoted more space to the establishment of my position, than in reality it deserves, for christians should, in my opinion, be placed beyond the pale of civilised life, and be treated with no more respect than we would treat unreasoning brutes. In dealing with a christian, I would assert whatever I was prepared to prove—never thinking of beginning with first principles and progressing onwards—such condescension would be thrown away, it would be worse than pearly swine. Christians declare atheists should not be reasoned with, and we must be asses to reason with *them*. Atheist and blasphemer are considered convertible terms by the orthodox, and Lord Brougham said, in 1834, when examined before a select committee of the House of Lords, on the law of Defamation and Libel: “I believe that a man who has this disposition (blaspheming) *is not a rational being*—NOT A MAN TO BE REASONED WITH!!!” I presume the authority of Lord Brougham, eccentric though he be, is sufficiently respectable and weighty, or authority on authority might be given.

Of course all which I have here written will be considered to be addressed to the irrational portion of humanity, called atheists, and not to be intended for the edification of the already-sufficiently-and-*only*-rational bipeds, yclepd christians. To proceed, then, without further preface, I intend to show what actions a man may *safely* commit without endangering his character as a christian, and without fearing the displeasure of his god—in other words, I intend to show what a man may be, and yet be a christian.

A MAN MAY BE

A COLD-BLOODED, DELIBERATE,
CALCULATING, HEARTLESS
VILLAIN,

And yet be a Christian,

For Jehovah, the god of the christians, after an eternity of thought, created two sentient beings—placed them in a paradise, *professedly* that they might be happy—having previously created an evil spirit to tempt them by means of some apples that grew on a tree which he planted for the purpose in this paradise—leaving them in ignorance of his design, the more surely to entrap them. And this Jehovah did, that he might not only furnish an excuse to himself for making them miserable in this life, or on this earth, but also—cursed be his name!—that he might have the exquisite, *godly* pleasure of subject-

ting them to the most excruciating torments of everlasting, eternal *burning* in a lake of ignited sulphur, care being taken that their sensations should be most acute, and the duration of their anguish unlimited. The god of the christians commanded the first pair to “*increase and multiply*, and replenish the earth,” and endowed them with an ungovernable instinct which impelled them to the performance of his command—by which means countless millions of sentient beings, after passing through their probationary state here, *are gone to replenish hell*, in accordance with his desire and intention. For Adam’s sin Jehovah *cursed the ground*, which had committed no sin—but this he did that Cain might be *induced* to murder Abel—for Abel was a shepherd, and “Cain was a tiller of the ground”—“And in process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and the fat thereof. And the lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering: but unto Cain, and to his offering, *he had no respect*, and Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.” And Cain slew his brother, as Jehovah had devised and intended, who then, although all-knowing, *pretended* to know nothing about it, and asked Cain “where is thy brother Abel?”—this he did that Cain might tell a lie, which he did, for he said “I know not.” Jehovah then cursed Cain, as he had previously cursed his father and mother, the serpent, and the earth.

W. C.

EPISTLES—NOT PAUL’S.

V.

(Concluded from page 314.)

HAD it not been for these illustrations we should have been cruelly ignorant of what he meant when he said unto them, “Resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also, and if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.” This was to supersede the old law of not making the punishment more than correspondent with the offence, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Under the new code the money-changers and pigeon-dealers got roughly treated and saw their occupations gone. Law and custom had sanctioned their calling; they had provided his mother with a pigeon or dove when she came up for her purification, the regular authorities had not interfered, nor had Jesus in his several visits to Jerusalem; nor had he given them any notice of entering so abruptly into the administration of his father’s affairs. Under this new code the officer got his ear cut off

for executing his orders. From such saws and instances we may expect the blessings attendant upon the practical performance of those virtues he recommended to his disciples on the mount—our share in the kingdom of heaven, the inheritance of the earth, the fullness of righteousness, the obtaining of mercy, the sight of god. By knowing the practical way of doing good to those who hate us, we shall become the children of our father *which* is in heaven, by copying the pattern of forgiving them that trespass against us, we shall have our trespasses forgiven. But we must take care to be active members of Christ's election, and, in the proper execution of christian benevolence, do harm like our saviour, to those who never did us any evil. We must not only do, we must speak ill of those who intend us a kindness. We must abuse that we may be reviled, violate the laws that we may be persecuted, and great will be our reward. Then we shall be salt, then we shall be light, then we shall fulfil all laws by breaking them, then we shall be perfect as our father in heaven is perfect. When you do an act of charity kick up a row, do it in church-time, or when you are sure to shock the prejudices of the people. When thou wouldst do a good thing in secret, take care and do it in public, and if you enjoin secrecy on the subject to any one, be sure that he will proclaim it. Recommend short prayers and pray all night, awake all the people about you, if they will go to sleep in spite of all you can say. Watch all night that you may look weary in the morning. Take no thought for the morrow, but if there is any danger coming, pass all the night thinking of it, and let your agony of apprehension surpass any that was ever heard of. This comes under the general maxim to show the efficacy of all rules by never observing them. Never mind about money, dress, or food, but recommend the rich to give everything they have to you. Take care to be well provided with the above necessities, when you want them to make your escape, or money to buy swords, when you know the officers of justice are in pursuit of you for swindling, robbery, riot, treason, as principal or accessory in these crimes, and you may have to follow up these, in comparison, petty offences, with murder, or an attempt at murder. Never do to others as you would be done unto, but try to impress on the minds of others, that they should do to you as they would be done unto. Except when they would put the law into execution against you, or, trying you by the common standard of morality, would judge themselves in such a case worthy of blame and punishment. "Bless them that curse you," or sing nothing but woe, woes, be damned to you—tell everybody that

does not please you or your party to go to hell—and that it shall be worse for them than if they had committed the most unnatural crimes. Giving a sample of heavenly justice in lieu of that which hath been said, and was thought more than enough, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. Show you would take ample revenge for injuries real or supposed, when you can get it, and if you cannot get it put into execution, leave the thought to your posterity to fulfil your purpose. Point out such a result as the accomplishment of your will and mission, and go to the grave exulting in the idea of the hecatombs of friends and foes that will be sacrificed to your manes. But, above all, say the contrary of whatever you do, and do the contrary of whatever you say, one thing at one time, and another at another, to one thing constant never. You will then follow the example of your great master in this art. Narrow, indeed, is the way to shoot it right, men are not accustomed to such tortuous routes. Such the discoverer of heaven, and such a road to it—it is not certain that in the inverse ratio of things his heaven is not hell, and he the devil himself, and christians the "salt that has lost its savour to be trodden under foot of man." Conduct so contrary to the ordinary course of nature, is a miracle, and requires a miracle to follow it—as Hume said, belief in christianity was itself a miracle. Types and prophecies were to be fulfilled, and we do not know how many yet wait to be accomplished, which the finger of time will unfold. Only slower than any other process, as it is difficult even for old time, in speech or action, to find duplicates, or any resemblance to divine eccentricities. He was the great sacrifice of the passover, and he might have taken the donkeys, as his progenitors had stolen the jewels of the Egyptians. Types and prophecies go by contradiction and dissemblance, as well as coincidence. Moses spoke manfully to the king of Egypt, and showed him wonders, which hardened his heart, therefore Jesus, a second Moses, or a greater than Moses, was not able to say a word before the authorities, or give a sign. Scrip, money, two swords were provided to resist the *posse communitatus* sent to arrest them in the Mount of Olives, as the run-aways from Egypt were pursued by the host of Pharaoh. When he was present, Pharaoh had not seized Moses—when Jesus was heard and seen of all men, the high-priest did not apprehend him, but sent to take him up when he made himself scarce. Moses escaped, Jesus was secured. Was this to ridicule the more sublime facts of Jewish history, and to show that they were only meant to point out a criminal obnoxious to the police of Jerusalem? The historical, to mark the private and apparently insignifi-

cant occurrence, the successful issue of his proceedings—in the one case, his triumph and glory; but to reflect by contrast, the littleness of human means, and the heavenly nature of the promised kingdom in the other. The Red Sea to be passed over by both, one in blood, the other dry. Poor George Jacob Holyoake had no miracles to perform, nothing to fulfil of other people's business who went before him, but only his own and the present generation, without a view of taking a random aim to his futurity. However, it appears, that the witness did bear false witness against George Jacob Holyoake, for he misrepresented what had been said. George Jacob Holyoake denied not only the construction put upon the words charged, but the words. The counsel joining in the subterfuge, talked of witnesses, when but one came forward to give wrong evidence. Seeing the certain result of the trials, George Jacob Holyoake spoke out more openly than Jesus, and gave judge, jury, and all the court occasion to cry out, what further need have we of witnesses? Behold now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, he is guilty. George Jacob Holyoake asked question as well as made answers, and did not remain silent, or confine himself to negations and affirmatives. He did not boast like Jesus, in his recommendation to his disciples, that God would provide a speech, which seemed in his case, the gift of dumbness, or an animal-like reserve. Jesus had scarcely a word to say, and if his counsel was the most high, had reason enough already to complain, "My god, my god, why hast thou forsaken me?" George Jacob Holyoake proved a better inspiration than the father gave to the son, by miraculously making a speech of near ten hours. Jesus had said that his hearers could not understand him, as he spoke in parables and mysteries, and he did not mean them to understand him, neither could his disciples comprehend him when living. When he ceased to speak, then only was he intelligible, his death was the only key to the interpretation of his language. Nevertheless, when called upon for his defence, he coolly asserted the contrary. He spoke openly, he never had said anything in secret, and those who had heard him, knew his doctrine better than he did himself, or could explain it. "The high-priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world—I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said."

Behold the strange *dénouement* of justice. George Jacob Holyoake—because a false

witness appears against him, misinterprets his ideas, and the judge cannot or will not understand them—is sentenced to six months' imprisonment. Jesus, guilty of offences which rendered him subject to capital punishment, takes his trial on a quibble, and is sent to be crucified. Peter, who cuts off a man's ear, gets off scot free. The Jews are said to have preferred a robber to Jesus Christ. At the same time with Holyoake's trial, those in the disturbed districts, who destroyed property, and would not let people go to their work, got a few weeks or a month's imprisonment. Salvador, in his life of Jesus, says the offence of Barabbas was of this description, purely political. Verily, some must have said with the thieves to Jesus, when they met Paterson and Holyoake in goal, seeing themselves in the same condemnation, "And we indeed justly—for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but these men have done nothing amiss." I hope they may all, out of prison, be where they so fervently wish, in the paradise of change for the better. I hope to them and to us, the Holyoake, the Holy of Israel, the heart of oak and tower of strength, the emblem of England, as his name is, and sacred to her good fortunes, may prove a political messiah, the Emanuel or god with us, come to restore the liberties of his country. Paterson, like Jesus is represented to have done, may have gone into Tothill-fields prison as into limbo, to rescue the spirits, and it is to be hoped that there may be a better hereafter for the rest of the world, than Jesus made of his incarnation, death, and resurrection.

W. J. B.

THEORY OF REGULAR GRADATION.

XLV.

(Lyell's Digest of Lamarck's Theory concluded.)

"SUCH is the machinery of the lamarckian system; but our readers will hardly, perhaps, be able to form a perfect conception of so complicated a piece of mechanism, unless we exhibit it in motion, and show in what manner it can work out, under the author's guidance, all the extraordinary effects which we behold in the present state of the animate creation. We have only space for exhibiting a small part of the entire process by which a complete metamorphosis is achieved; and shall, therefore, omit the mode whereby, after a countless succession of generations, a small gelatinous body is transformed into an oak or an ape. We pass on at once to the last grand step in the progressive scheme, whereby the orang-outang, having been already evolved out of a monad, is made slowly to attain the attributes and dignity of man.

"One of the races of quadrumanous animals which had reached the highest state of perfection, lost, by constraint of circumstances (concerning the exact nature of which tradition is unfortunately silent), the habit of climbing trees, and of hanging on by grasping the boughs with their feet, as with hands. The individuals of this race being obliged for a long series of generations to use their feet exclusively for walking, and ceasing to employ their hands as feet, were transformed into bimanous animals, and what before were thumbs became mere toes, no separation being required when their feet were used solely for walking. Having acquired a habit of holding themselves upright, their legs and feet assumed insensibly a conformation fitted to support them in an erect attitude, till at last these animals could no longer go on all fours without much inconvenience.

"The Angola orang, *simia troglodytes*, Linn., is the most perfect of animals, much more so than the Indian orang, *simia satyrus*, which has been called the orang-outang, although both are very inferior to man in corporeal powers and intelligence. These animals frequently hold themselves upright, but their organisation has not yet been sufficiently modified to sustain them habitually in this attitude, so that the standing posture is very uneasy to them. When the Indian orang is compelled to take flight from pressing danger, he immediately falls down upon all fours, showing clearly that this was the original position of the animal. Even in man, whose organisation, in the course of a long series of generations, has advanced so much farther, the upright posture is fatiguing, and can only be supported for a limited time, and by aid of the contraction of many muscles. If the vertebral column formed the axis of the human body, and supported the head and all the other parts in equilibrium, then might the upright position be a state of repose; but as the human head does not articulate in the centre of gravity; as the chest, belly, and other parts, press almost entirely forward with their whole weight, and as the vertebral column reposes upon an oblique base, a watchful activity is required to prevent the body from falling. Children which have large heads and prominent bellies can hardly walk at the end even of two years, and their frequent tumbles indicate the natural tendency in man to resume the quadrupedal state.

"Now, when so much progress had been made by the quadrumanous animals before mentioned, that they could hold themselves habitually in an erect attitude, and were accustomed to a wide range of vision, and ceased to use their jaws for fighting, and tearing, or for clipping herbs for food, their

snout became gradually shorter, their incisor teeth became vertical, and the facial angle grew more open.

"Among other ideas which the natural tendency to perfection engendered, the desire of ruling suggested itself, and this race succeeded at length in getting the better of the other animals, and made themselves masters of all those spots on the surface of the globe which best suited them. They drove out the animals which approached nearest to them in organisation and intelligence, and which were in a condition to dispute with them the good things of this world, forcing them to take refuge in deserts, woods, and wildernesses, where their multiplication was checked, and the progressive development of their faculties retarded, while in the mean time the dominant race spread itself in every direction, and lived in large companies where new wants were successively created, exciting them to industry, and gradually perfecting their means and faculties.

"In the supremacy and increased intelligence acquired by the ruling race, we see an illustration of the natural tendency of the organic world to grow more perfect, and in their influence in repressing the advance of others, an example of one of those disturbing causes before enumerated, that force of external circumstances, which causes such wide chasms in the regular series of animated beings.

"When the individuals of the dominant race became very numerous, their ideas greatly increased in number, and they felt the necessity of communicating them to each other, and of augmenting and varying the signs proper for the communication of ideas. Meanwhile the inferior quadrumanous animals, although most of them were gregarious, acquired no new ideas, being persecuted and restless in the deserts, and obliged to fly and conceal themselves, so that they conceived no new wants. Such ideas as they already had remained unaltered, and they could dispense with the communication of the greater part of these. To make themselves, therefore, understood by their fellows, required merely a few movements of the body or limbs—whistling, and the uttering of certain cries, varied by the inflexions of the voice.

"On the contrary, the individuals of the ascendant race, animated with a desire of interchanging their ideas, which became more and more numerous, were prompted to multiply the means of communication, and were no longer satisfied with mere pantomimic signs, nor even with all the possible inflexions of the voice, but made continual efforts to acquire the power of uttering articulate sounds, employing a few at first, but afterwards varying and perfecting them ac-

cording to the increase of their wants. The habitual exercise of their throat, tongue and lips, insensibly modified the conformation of these organs, until they became fitted for the faculty of speech.

"In affecting this mighty change, 'The exigencies of the individuals were the sole agents, they gave rise to efforts, and the organs proper for articulating sounds were developed by their habitual employment.' Hence, in this peculiar race, the origin of the admirable faculty of speech; hence also the diversity of languages, since the distance of places where the individuals composing the race established themselves, soon favoured the corruption of conventional signs."

ORACLE POLICY.

WHY do we exist? to what end do we and all things attain their several gradations of infancy, maturity, old age, decay, and death? Why do things die? Why do they begin to be? These and such like questions commonly occupy the mind of reflecting men, and, mayhap, of all sentient beings. Is this sort of mental inquiry useful to those who are disposed to it, and through them to society at large? I think so, for this reason, a pleasurable state of feeling is the aim and object of all, no matter whether biped, quadruped, or other, and pleasure and pain are contagious—those, then, who reflect on the continual turmoil of change around them, are better prepared to preserve that equilibrium of feeling which is akin to, and closely allied to, the tranquillity of the mind we call happiness—if, then, this mental pursuit, conduces to fortitude and forbearance, a desire to conserve and promote our own interests with that of others, surely such inquiries are, philosophically speaking, the best we can pursue—if the mind be at ease when thus employed, it is surely more desirable for all good purposes, than the restlessness, the undulating disturbance of feeling, produced by religious faiths and political warfare. The human mind, then, in the see-saw scales of politics and religion, is ill-adapted to prosecute the straightforward course of philosophic progress, which I presume, gave occasion for the title to the *Oracle*. This being the case, then, I apprehend that the writers for this paper have been ill-advised in meddling with a question of mere politics, such as I conceive the article on Repeal to be. The project for assassinating the parsons of Ireland has been freely commented upon, and the projector's right to publish his suggestion fully accorded, but how does the projector defend his sentiment? chiefly by raking from the pages of doubtful and partisan history, and culling from the speeches of partisan parliamentary declaimers—but though such instances and authorities were never so

numerous, they, the writers and speakers were by no means professed oracles of reason, or vindicators of philosophy, and it is because I would see our title written up to, and kept in view, that I have ventured to recommend an abstinence from its pages of those sentiments which depend for their chief support and justification on mercenary history-makers, or speech utterers, whom we are more inclined to credit, rather as knaves, than men seeking the real and undeniable good of their fellows. Let us, then, confine ourselves more to our text—the philosophy of moral and physical science presents a wide field for our exertions—religious weeds and brambles choke the source of moral good, and till these be removed, our labours in the cause of virtue are in vain. Let us, then, continue as we began, to furnish aid to the weak, encouragement to the timid in the destruction of those phantom notions which bewray the intellect and disturb, with fearful apprehensions, the uncultivated man. Our cause is good and true, and must prevail. A pandering press has tried its hand in vain to bolster up the intertextured systems of religious and political fraud, which have in all times kept the world a slaughter-house—credulous humans have been constrained to furnish beads and hearts in myriads, to the gloating god-proclaimers, who dread, at length, the coming time, as well they may—the human sweat and blood they love to feast on waxes less for them, and now the shadows, harbingers of coming good, proclaim a speedy end to priest dominion.

CHARLES DENT.

REPEAL OF THE UNION.

"THE principle of federalism has not been sufficiently examined by political philosophers. Theoretically, it is better adapted to the wants of man in society, than the principle of great monarchical dominions under a sole central government—wheresoever the physical, or moral interests of the governed are discordant, wheresoever the rights and advantages of one mass of population, their prosperity, industry, well-being, property, natural benefits of soil, situation, and climate, their manners, language, religion, nationality in spirit or prejudice, are set aside, and sacrificed to those of another mass. In almost all extensive monarchies this must be the case, from the centralisation inseparable from that species of general government. Federalism seems a more natural and just principle of general government theoretically considered, than this forced centralisation. No rights or advantages of any of the parts are sacrificed in federation, for nothing is centralised but what is necessary for the external defence, safety, and welfare of all the parts. The peculiar internal welfare of each part, according to its own peculiar internal circumstances, physical

and moral, according to its own political idiosyncrasy, is in its own keeping, in its own internal legislative and administrative powers. As civilisation, peace, and industry acquire an influence in the affairs of mankind, which the individual ambition of a sovereign, or the ignorance and evil passions of a government, will not be allowed to shake, the superiority of small independent states federally united, each extending over such territory, or masses of society only, as can be governed together, without the sacrifice of one part to another, and each interested in the general civilisation, peace, and industry, will probably be acknowledged by all civilised populations. Junctions morally or physically discordant, as that of Belgium and Holland, Austria and Lombardy, districts and populations on the Vistula and Neiman, with districts and populations on the Rhine and Moselle, are political arrangements which lack any principle of permanency founded upon their benefits to the governed. Nature forbids, by the unalterable differences of soil, climate, situation, and natural advantages of country, or by the equally unalterable moral differences between people and people, that one government can equally serve all—be equally suited to promote the utmost good of all. Federalism involves a principle more akin to natural, free, and beneficial legislation, and to the improvement of the social condition of man, than governments in single extensive states, holding legislative and executive powers over distant and distinct countries and populations, whether such governments be constitutional or despotic. It is much more likely to be the future progress of society, that Europe in the course of time, civilisation, and the increasing influence of public opinion on all public affairs, will resolve itself into one great federal union of many states, of extent suitable to their moral and physical peculiarities, like the union of the American states, than that those American states will, in the course of time and civilisation, fall back into separate, unconnected monarchies and aristocracies, which some modern travellers in America assure us is their inevitable doom. With all respect for their gifts of prophecy, the tendency of human affairs is not to retrograde towards the old, but to advance towards the new, towards a higher physical, moral, and religious condition; towards forms of government in which the interests of the people shall be directed by the people, and for the people. Moral and intellectual power is leavening the whole mass, and not merely the upper crust of society. The political balance of power among the European governments, if the idea could be carried out to its utmost completeness and

permanency, is in reality a homage to the principle of federalism, an imperfect approximation to a federal union of European powers—imperfect, because the interests of kingdoms territorially or dynastically considered as family estates, not the distinct physical and moral interests of the different masses of the European population, are attempted to be federalised. Yet this imperfect principle of federalism is eminently successful in the political federation of the Germanic states. This federation acts with dignity and power. In Switzerland, and in America, the constitution of the central federated power may be imperfect, may be too strong, or not strong enough; or even the state of society may not be ripe for the federal constitution adopted, and may, as yet, want a class removed by education and fortune from the temptation of turning public affairs to their private pecuniary advantage, but still the principle of federalism, theoretically considered, appears more reasonable and suitable to the well-being of society than the monarchical, and appears to be that towards which civilised and educated society is naturally tending in its course. The German custom-house union, or commercial league, is a remarkable indication of the irresistible tendency of social economy in modern times towards the principles of federalism. Kings and governments are often but the blind agents in these vast spontaneous movements of society. In this great measure of federalising the German populations for the regulation and advancement of their industrial and commercial interests, is involved a principle which must necessarily extend to the constitutional and political rights and interests of these communities; and one altogether incompatible with the principle and system of the very governments and kings who at present lead this movement of the social body in Germany.”—*Laing's Notes of a Traveller.*

NOTICE.

RECEIVED—Hymns for the Million, No. 3, “The Christians’ Nix My Dolly.” The First Epistle of Paul, an apostle of atheism. The Happy Parson. Pills for the Pious. Commentary on John, iii. 19. The Greatest Slave. The Second Night’s Discussion on the Existence of a god, at John-street. Vine, Wine, and Cup.

SUBSCRIPTIONS.

For the London Anti-Persecution Union.

A. Y.	25	..	..	..	..	..	..	£0	0	6
Collector 25	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0	0	9
Mr. McVeagh	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0	1	0
Mr. Cooper	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0	0	6
Collector 20	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0	0	7
Per J. C. F., S. M., Liverpool	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0	5	0

G. J. H., Sec.

Received by Messrs. T. P., C. S., and G. J. H., from W. J. ... £0 15 0

HYMNS FOR THE MILLION—No. 2.

THE LOVES OF THE ANGEL
GABRIEL & THE VIRGIN MARY.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise.—
Holy Gospel.

Air, "Barney Brallaghan."

'Twas one of your cloudy nights,
At two o'clock in the morning,
When an angel dressed in tights,
All wind and weather scorning,
At a fair young Jewess's door
He stuck him a top of the paling:
His love-tale he did pour,
And this was a part of his wailing—
Only say
You'll have the angel Gaby!
Don't say nay!
And I'll be as civil as may be.

Then Gabriel made his bow,
And began with an interjection;
And said that he hoped as how
She wouldn't have no objection.
"I come from the lord, to say,
How he thinks it necessary
You should be in the family way."
"Very good!" said the Virgin Mary.
Then only say
You'll have the angel Gaby!
Don't say nay;
And we'll be as happy as may be.

Then Mary she got herself wed
To Joseph, by dint of urg'in';
And Joe, when they came to bed,
Found out that she was n't a virgin.
He bother'd and rack'd his brain
How to rid him of such a dilemma;
Then tumbled to sleep again,
For he was a mighty dreamer.
And as he lay
There came the angel Gaby,
Only to say—
He mustn't disown the baby.

Says Gabriel "I must say,
Mr. Carpenter, to you, sir!
If you turn your wife away
You'll be a damnable loser.
The child of which she is big, sir!
Is got by the lord of hosts;
He'll play up hell with the pigs, sir!
As a friend of the holy ghost's."
Off and away
Flew the angel Gaby;
And Joe, next day,
Father'd Jehovah's baby.

MORAL.

Now every marrying youth
Give heed to what I am screaming:
If you want to get at the truth,
There's no such plan as dreaming.
And all you single gals
Who wish for to be respected,
336

Take angels for your palls,
You'll not ever be suspected.
Mind what I say—
Whenever you want a baby,
Don't get in the family way
Till you have to do with a GABY.
A.G.

At a public tea party held in the Lyne Dock tavern, Long-row, South Shields, a few weeks since, in honour of George Julian Harney, the following resolution was proposed by Mr. Kydd, an honest, talented, and enthusiastic young man, an advocate of the people's charter: "That in the opinion of this meeting, the principles of democracy recognises the full right of thought and speech in all men of all creeds and opinions, we therefore express our heartfelt sympathy with Messrs. Robinson, Finlay, and Pater-son, of Edinburgh, in their present persecution for the supposed crime of blasphemy." Mr. Harney seconded the resolution, which was carried unanimously. It is very gratifying to witness these exhibitions of sympathy proceeding from a numerous body like the chartists. It is an earnest that nothing more is wanting than proper direction of the mind already created to secure the right of expression upon all subjects, whether political or theological. The chartists are as much interested in the establishment of this right as the atheists, and cannot refuse their assistance without injury to themselves. Though much support is rendered by the socialists *individually*, I am sorry to say that I fear strenuous efforts are made by the heads of the party to obstruct our progress and destroy our labours. Agitation for liberty interferes with money scraping, and the advocates of the latter never scruple to sacrifice the strugglers for the former—ED.

A MYSTERY CLEARED UP.—An ingenious friend, anxious for "the truth," whether it is in, or out of "Jesus," thus accounts for the rejection of Cain's offering. Cain "brought the fruit of the ground," which, being green, would not burn. Cain, doubtless, owing to his ignorance of chemistry, did not think of this. Abel, on the other hand, presented the "firstling of his flock and the *fat* thereof." The *fat* soon produced "a flare up," and his offering was consequently deemed accepted. Had Cain waited until mechanics' institutions began to give lectures on chemistry, before making his offering, he might have learned how to *outshine* poor Abel, which would have been better than breaking his head. Ignorance of chemistry caused the death of Abel.

An accident prevented the appearance of the conclusion of the City Road meeting.

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No. 40 Holywell-street, Strand, London.
Saturday, Sep. 30, 1843.

ORACLE OF REASON:

Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE."

First Editor—Charles Southwell, imprisoned for twelve months and fined £100, for Blasphemy in No. 4

Second Editor—George Jacob Holyoake, imprisoned for six months, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.

Third Editor—Thomas Paterson, imprisoned for one month, for Blasphemous Placards, in London.

Vendors—George Adams, imprisoned for one month for selling No. 25, in Cheltenham; and

Harriet Adams, his wife, arrested for selling No. 4, in the same town.

No. 95.]

EDITED BY WILLIAM CHILTON.

[PRICE 1d.]

**"THE NEWCASTLE SOCIETY OF
BIGOTS & SUPERSTITIONISTS,
FOR THE OVERTHROW OF ALL
SUPERSTITIONS — BUT THEIR
OWN."**

Each sect upbraids *the rest* with superstition,
And boast their wisdom in this curst condition!
Thro' all the scale of animated nature,
There is not such another stupid creature!
Writs now seem wanted wheresoe'er we go,
Of "inquiring de lunatico."
Yes, superstition is the Yahoo's curse!—Yahoo.

LAWRENCE STERNE gave it as his opinion that the cant of hypocrisy was the worst cant of all in this canting world—but he had not seen or heard of the cant of liberalism, the cant of freedom, or, worse than all, *the cant of infidelity*, or he never would have uttered such a thought, or have entertained such an idea. Religious cant is natural, no one is surprised to witness it. Religion is so outrageously unnatural, that men could not tolerate one another, if they consistently acted up to its dogmas—cant, then, with the religious, is a necessary consequence of their opinions, and is a principal ingredient in their professions. But the reverse of this is true of infidelity—here it is as unnatural and disgusting, as, in the profession of religion, it is natural and becoming. I sincerely pity a religiously superstitious man, while I most cordially hate his superstition—but I have feelings of disgust and horror of the superstitious infidel, while I utterly despise and condemn his bigotry. In my choice of companions, I would infinitely prefer associating with the wildest religious fanatic, than with the pseudo-liberal, or intolerant, persecuting, anti-superstitionist.

Persecution, narrowmindedness, and a hatred of reason, harmonise with religion—religion could not exist an hour without them—they are its props and supports in all climes and in all ages—remove them, and the huge structure they have supported crumbles into ruin. Not so with infidelity, or anti-superstition—instead of invigorating they paralise—where, in their native element, they produced spirit and life, here their presence is marked with lassitude and death—

like a subtle poison, depraving and corrupting. How disgusting, then, is their association with *professors* of infidelity, and to hear them unblushingly vaunting their use.

The canting liberals of this country persecute and vilify their more liberal countrymen—the republicans of America cant about their freedom, and will unscrupulously murder those who ask them to free their slaves—and the "Newcastle Society for the Overthrow of Superstition," will cant about their exertions in the cause of freedom of opinion, and the money they have collected and expended in attacking *other men's* prejudices, while steeped themselves in prejudice to the very lips. This society assisted the widow of a victim of tyranny, because the members of his party had been kind to a victim in the ranks of the anti-superstitionists, and *not* because her husband died in the defence of a sacred principle. No! the principle might have sunk, and the widow might have perished, had not the party her husband espoused, *nobly acting up to their principles*, succoured and assisted an advocate for those principles, *though not of their own party*.

The members of this precious society, who are also socialists, or so-called ones, assisted G. J. Holyoake during his persecution by the Cheltenham bigots, because he was a socialist, *and had never objectionably attacked any of the errors of its professors*, but they refused to support a society formed for the protection of *all* men, "without regard to class, sect, or party," because, forsooth, the *paper* in which the reports of the "Anti-Persecution" society appeared had attacked the errors, or supposed errors, of the socialist body, the socialist founder, and R. Carlile! The reports of the Anti-Persecution Union (London) were published in the *Oracle*, the *only* paper whose pages were open to it, and the readers of which paper were the main supporters of that union. Neither the members of the Anti-Persecution Union generally, nor any member particularly, had absolute control over the pages of this paper, nor have they now—and yet these bigots of Newcastle make a merit of refusing to assist the union, because writers in the *Oracle* freely expressed their opinions of socialist conduct,

not, be it remembered, deprecatory of socialism.

The "Newcastle Society for the Overthrow of Superstition," published, according to G. J. H., in 89, a report in the organ of the rational society, on July 1, from which Mr. Holyoake gives the following extracts: "The Overthrow of Superstition Society did not support the Anti-Persecution Union, in consequence of the attacks of its organ upon the socialists and the late Mr. R. Carlile.....At various times upwards of £5 were forwarded for the support of Mr. Holyoake, in Gloucester Gaol, and 12s. were sent to the widow of the late Mr. Holberry, the chartist, because of the kind behaviour of the Cheltenham chartists to Mr. Holyoake."

Was there ever more contemptible reasons given for refusing to assist a valuable society, or for assisting the widow of a martyr to freedom of thought and action, than these? These are the men who bring just principles into contempt. The Newcastle society was established for the eradication of religious vice—this paper was started for the same purpose. This paper attacked the *policy* of the socialists and the conduct of Richard Carlile, who had become a complete *religious superstitionist*, and the Newcastle society refused to support the London Anti-Persecution Union, because the union made this paper its organ! Did the members of the Newcastle society withdraw their support from the *Oracle*, for the same reason? They should have done so to be consistent. Fortunately for the cause of freedom of expression, this paper, which has rendered that cause such essential service, has long ceased to depend for existence on the support to be obtained from such illiberal, persecuting, cowardly poltroons. It has been carried on despite of the attacks of enemies and the lukewarmness of pretended friends, and will be continued so long as its conductors think proper, the difficulties I have mentioned notwithstanding.

Whatever may be thought of my opinion, I declare that I would rather have the hatred of such men than their friendship. Open foes, says the proverb, are better than insidious friends—and I say, open enemies of freedom are better than pretended friends, who want but the opportunity to stab her. Such paltry, pettifogging drivellers, as these Newcastle anti-superstitionists, would as soon assist the foes of freedom of thought, as they would persecute its advocates—and, I have no doubt, sooner, if no other means were left them of revenging any imaginary, or real, injury received from those who *really* sought the objects which they pretended to seek.

W. C.

The benefits thou giv'st, remember never;
Of those thou dost receive, be mindful ever.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT MADE PLAIN.

"THOSE that have faith shall remove mountains," and in that spirit we will essay to get rid of that long-standing and firmly-rooted mountain of prejudice which is the present base of the sermon on the mount. It was so called because Matthew says Jesus stood upon a little hill, like a cock on his own dunghill, and crowed to his disciples. Unfortunately for the world this supposed mount has proved a moral volcano, which has ever since been belching forth its combustibles. Its materials, never agreeing, are always sending forth their smoke, fire, and lava, but its eruptions growing fainter and fewer, we hope before many years have passed over the world it will be classed amongst the extinct volcanoes. Jesus, like the frog in the fable, was always trying to swell himself to the size of the bull. It was because Moses received the commandments in Mount Sinai, and came down therefrom to deliver them, that Jesus, according to Matthew, "*Went up into a mountain, and when he was set, his disciples came unto him, and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying,*" &c. But according to Luke, "It came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to god, and when it was day he called unto him his disciples; and he came down with them and stood in the plain." Here the sermon on the mount proves a stumbling-block at once—was he on the hill or in the hollow—did he stand up or sit down? Or, was it a regular Greenwich fair day with the lord, his disciples, and his ladies, now sitting and rolling down the hill, then getting on their legs and walking up to perform fresh summersets. This is the only way to preserve the text, and not take only one of two interpretations, but believe all we can. This last alternative being after the most approved orthodox fashion, we must apply these contradictory passages prophetically. Of this we are sure, that if any one tries to get up this mount, practice morally its commands, he will soon roll down again to the bottom. Consider Moses on Sinai, when he came down and found all the people eating and drinking, and dancing to a calf, Jesus up and down hill, shows above and shows below—but several types of Greenwich fair. We must consider the lord never took his own name in vain, and never spoke without a purpose, and that this world shall not pass away till every jot and tittle of the law and the prophets shall be fulfilled. Strauss indeed, who examines critically, but not morally, the life of Jesus, removes mountain, sermon, and Jesus, and sends all historically to the devil. But we accept revelation as it is given, and from the fulness of our faith, the riches of

our table, can afford to give a crust to a christian, the mystical way of accommodating his belief to these fictions and contradictions. Another commentator, Salvador, says the sermon on the mount was an imitation of the blessings and the curses which Moses directed to be pronounced from Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. It will be observed that this interpretation will only suit Luke, who gives us the woes. When Jesus left his nondescript geographical position, he treated the multitude to the miracle of the loaves and fishes, which they liked better than his words, the blessings of an empty stomach, and all other miracles. This was probably to match the calf, which the Jews, fresh from the flesh-pots of Egypt, liked rather better than the thunder and lightning, and the stones instead of bread, with the penmanship of god upon them—the mouse which the mountain brought forth from its pains and labours under the midwifery of Moses.

Of all the schemes for bettering humanity, we never heard of such a panacea for evils as the see-saw of misery and happiness proposed in the blessings and curses of Jesus, one end up and the other down, and a turn about in heaven. As to the threat held out to those who laugh, it is like the nursery-maid's menace to a grinning urchin, after some mischievous prank, "I will make you laugh the wrong side of your mouth, sir, when I catch you." Only think, for laughing here to be damned with a wry face for ever after. What a prospect for the poor in everything, the weeping and gnashing of teeth to come of those well-off, a new set of course furnished for the occasion to those who have lost them. What a happiness to know the more there are well off in this world, the more places are taken in hell, and the elect are not to be called to the few reserved vacant seats in heaven, until the whole of the rest of kingdom-come is filled. Whoever was to break one of the least commandments and teach men so was to be least in the kingdom of heaven, now where would "I say unto you" be, who broke and contradicted the statute and common law of the Jews, the greatest as well as the least? Instead of being least in the kingdom of heaven he was more like the greatest somewhere else, Satan himself. Every curse in life is to bring a blessing in heaven. A slap on one cheek, you are to beg for a slap on the other, to make both sides even. This is recommending the conduct of the lawyers in Pickwick, who, seeing this good-natured man inclined to strike them for their rascality, or get from hard words to blows, call upon him to execute his resolves, "now pray do, do sir, do strike us." They would have got costs, and the disciples would have got a

verdict and damages in heaven in proportion to the blows they met with on earth. This melodramatic provincial star, Jesus, dealt so in brimstone, and blue lights, prescribing its introduction on every occasion, little or big, that if he had only reverted to his own conduct, he would have found that he had passed judgment upon himself and burnt his fingers with his own hell fire. "It was said by them of old time," and the "I say unto you," was equivalent to saying, my old father was an old fool, and was of such an opinion, but I am of another, and tell you so and so.

W. J. B.

DIFFICULTIES.

C. H. WRITES to say that the reasonings of the *Oracle* have added him to the ranks of atheism, but that being as yet only partially acquainted with the subject, he finds himself pressed by believers for answers to certain objections. C. H. enumerates three, but they may be thus expressed.

Atheism is not satisfactory, unless it accounts for a creation, or beginning of things, and, gives reasons for the beauty, order, and constant movements of the universe.

C. H. desires to be informed what to say to these objectors. In the first place, an atheist does not believe that things had a beginning. He holds that matter is eternal. *Creation* is what no man can understand—no one, whether atheist or christian, can ever conceive such an event. It is not fair in the christian to require the atheist to explain what the christian himself can neither account for, explain, nor conceive.

With regard to the "beauty and order of the universe," I may say, that it is by no means certain that, *on the whole*, there is beauty and order manifested in the universe.

The christian says that it was cursed on the fall of poor Adam. It therefore may be fairly questioned whether a "cursed world" is overdone with beauty and order. The Rev. Mr. Irons, and the pious Stanley Faber, declare it to be a mockery to talk of the beauty and order of the universe. After this, the atheist may be excused giving reasons for what, upon religious own authority, does not exist.

Perhaps C. H.'s friends would change tactics upon hearing this answer, and say, "Well, what reasons can you give for what is manifested in the universe, including its ceaseless movements?" My answer is, I can give no reasons *why* these things are. It is no more wonderful that they should be, than that they should not. The christian cannot answer the question—he can throw no light upon this mystery which has puzzled men in all ages—except by saying god

caused it all. Which really amounts to saying that he does not know anything at all about it. The word god being but a serious name, invented to hide christian ignorance. G. J. H.

THE SCOTCH GOD WAR.

ANOTHER ARREST.

Glasgow, 28th Sept.

G. Jacob Holyoake,
Sec. Anti-Persecution Union.

MY DEAR SIR.—“More prosecutions for blasphemy.” This sentence might be stereotyped amongst us. I have just received intelligence, by the arrival of a friend from Campsie, of the arrest of a bookseller of the name of John McNeil, for vending blasphemous publications. He was taken this afternoon, conveyed to Stirling Gaol (a distance of several miles from Campsie), and his examination before the procurator fiscal of the county is expected to take place to-morrow. I have often seen and conversed with Mc Neil, and from my intercourse with him, as well as from the testimony of those who know him, I believe him to be an intelligent, honest, and steady young man. He was an itinerant bookseller, and visited with a stall several towns and villages for some distance round the country, where he has done considerable good, by selling socialist and infidel publications, as well as those of a general character. A fortnight since the Rev. Robert Lee, established minister of Campsie, bought from McNeil No. 91, of the *Oracle*, which circumstance has led to this prosecution. Campsie is a manufacturing village in Stirlingshire, with a population I believe of about 2000, and about 16 or 18 miles from Glasgow. There are many freethinkers among the working classes, but they dare not appear publicly, on account of the intolerance of the influential class. In Stirling, where the examination and trial will take place, there is not one socialist or infidel who can take any part in the matter. There will then, be difficulty in procuring bail, and in many other respects to the disadvantage of McNeil. He has been very active in collecting for the Scottish Anti-Persecution Union, and we must now do our best to assist him. What are you doing in London? Pray urge upon the friends the necessity of action, for really an important struggle is now going forward in Scotland. In haste,

Yours, sincerely,

HENRY JEFFERY.

P.S. Please communicate this to Chilton.

Edinburgh, September 28, 1843.

THE monotony of eight days is at last broken in upon. This day of our lord, Wednesday, [at half-past one p.m., a bigot,

animated by the spirit of Bonner, made a bold attack on my windows. While I, in imaginary security, was snugly ensconced in the back premises, a breachment was made in the fort, by the smashing of *seven panes of glass*, and had I not sallied forth with a friend, the enemy no doubt would have effected a lodgement. As it was, seeing I was prepared to make a vigorous resistance, he decamped — I after him, without hat, and after a gallant run of a few minutes, captured him, singing out, “who is on the lord’s side?” I, however, kept him at my side till a policeman took him in charge. The poor god-stricken idiot cut his hand dreadfully, and could not help telling me the lord would yet serve me out. You see we have sometimes a little flare-up, as an interlude between greater pieces. On Friday last, a dog was standing with his fore-paws on the window-frame, carefully quizzing the publications, when, either by accident or design, I am not determined which, he sent his snout right through one pane, cut his nose, and went howling off, licking the blood from his nose as he ran, I let him escape, thinking that if it was a made up thing among the dogs, his punishment would operate as a warning to the others. But the christian dog is not destined to come off so easy, I hope.

This same spark has visited me frequently before, and I am of opinion he has been advised by some equally zealous, but more cunning, christians, as the best species of annoyance possible. I have put in my window “*Crack arguments in favour of christianity, the seven seals opened.*”...

By god! just had the case before the sheriff. The fellow was made out insane, so he is, at least, religiously so, his father is poor—sheriff said he could not award me compensation, I must try another court—so that I am likely to be diddled out of 21s., besides the bad example shown.

Yours truly,

T. P.

THEORY OF REGULAR GRADATION.

XLVI.

SUCH a length of time has elapsed since I first commenced this series of articles, and so many accidents have broken the thread of my discourse, making it difficult for the reader, who, for the first time, perhaps, has given his attention to the subject, to follow me, and adapt the many particular illustrations I have given of the general principle—I shall now, in conclusion, give a summary of the evidence I have adduced, show its bearing upon the question, and re-assert the superior *probability* of the theory of regular gradation, or of the transmutation of species, over the asserted *absolute creation* of all

material substances and forms by an intelligent god—which is contended for by theologians and religionists all over the world.

Those of my readers who have long since thrown off the fetters of superstitious prejudice, and who upon the dawn of geology saw the consequences which would result from the establishment of the truth of its revelations, must not suppose that all the world, nor even all the thinking and intellectual world, are of the same opinion as themselves—for if they do imbibe so flattering a notion, they will be most grievously deceived. Far from christians generally of the present day, giving up the mosaic cosmogony, some of the ablest writers of the day contend for its truth over geology. In the *Morning Herald* of September last, is a long extract from the "Church of England Quarterly Review," on Scripture Geology. Upon the subject of creation is the following :

"They (geologists) talk loosely and familiarly of creation and extinction, as if these were two of the laws of matter, like attraction and repulsion—as if these were laws now in operation, the progress of which we can watch, and measure, and weigh—when they mean no such thing—and when to both words they attach *two meanings*, and, between the two, shirk the exact and rigid application of either. For creation and extinction are not co-relatives—the proper opposite to creation is annihilation—but this would not serve the same turn. They mean creation proper—the bringing into being of new forms of life: they do not mean uncreation proper—the making those beings as though they had never been—but extinction of the life, without destroying the form—and the evil of improperly assorting such terms as creation and extinction, is sure to extend to both terms. For though creation proper is the only meaning which truly agrees with their argument, since their extinction at each stage does mean the disposal of all the then existing creation in the stratum then deposited, and consequently to bring in the new inhabitants of the next stratum, there is absolutely nothing for it, in their theory, but new creation—yet they shrink from the idea, and would fain imagine that the germs of the new forms of being had been latent somewhere, in the air, or the sea, or the bowels of the earth, and were brought to light by chance, rather than by the power of god. Nay, even in the acknowledged *beginning* of all things, they will scarcely allow the proper meaning of creation, and often flatly deny it—as is the case of Dr. Buckland, quoting with approbation from Dr. Chalmers, as follows:—'Does Moses ever say that, when god created the heavens and the earth, he did no more at that time alluded to, than transform them out of

previously-existing materials?' — (Bridge-water Treatise.) So then, to create is to transform! But what is gained by this? The previously existing materials *must* have, some time or other, *been brought out of nothing!*—*must* have been *created proper* when they began to be!—*and what other time is this but the beginning, the time when god created the heavens and the earth?*"

Here, then, we have an absolute creation of something (matter) out of nothing (no matter) resolutely contended for, upon the authority of the bible, this will be further seen from the following, a part of the same article :

"Now there is one volume *which we rank higher than the book of nature*, or the volumes of science, and to the standard of which we would bring the book of nature, assured that *where they differ we have not read the book of nature aright*. We are sure that the bible speaks of only *one* creation, and at the beginning—that it speaks of only *one* revolution or catastrophe, and at the deluge—and we, therefore, scrutinise narrowly that interpretation of the book of nature which professes to discover *many* creations, and *many* catastrophes—and we assert that on scrutiny, we find it to be manifestly erroneous—inconsistent with itself and with science—and, therefore, even leaving the bible out of the question, this interpretation cannot stand."

It is unnecessary that I should endeavour to controvert these absurd dogmas, for I have already given my readers a sufficient number of geological *facts*, from the highest authorities, in disproof of the mosaic cosmogony. The two extracts following, from our two greatest geologists and natural philosophers, will be illustrative of my previous arguments, and render immediate reference to former articles unnecessary. Dr. Buckland says :

"The study of these remains will form our most interesting and instructive subject of inquiry, since it is in them that we shall find the great master-key, whereby we may unlock the secret history of the earth. They are documents which contain the evidences of revolutions and catastrophes *long antecedent* to the creation of the human race—they open the book of nature, and swell the volumes of science with the records of *many successive series of animal and vegetable creations*, of which the creation and extinction would have been equally unknown to us, but for recent discoveries in the science of geology."

Baron Cuvier, upon the same subject, says :

"It is certain that we are at present at least in the midst of a fourth succession of terrestrial animals—and that after the age of reptiles, after that of palæotheria, after that of mammoths, mastodonta, and mega-

HYMNS FOR THE MILLION—No. 3.

THE CHRISTIAN'S NIX MY DOLLY

Air, "Nix my Dolly."

IN Bethlehem city I was born,
Of a virgin mother the kid forlorn :

Fake away!

My noble father, as I've heard say,
Was a carpenter, or an angel *gay*,
Nix my dolly, pals! fake away!
Nix my dolly, pals! fake away!

My nux in quod did my schoolmen play,
And put me up to the time of day :

Fake away!

No dummy hunter had forks so sly,
No miracle-worker so slick as I :
Nix my dolly, pals! fake away!
Nix my dolly, pals! fake away!

But Judas Iscariot one fine day
To the beaks did the "son of god" betray :
Fake away!

So Pilate he bowl'd me out at last,
And crucified me hard and fast :
Nix my dolly, pals! fake away!
Nix my dolly, pals! fake away!

But I slipp'd to Paradise that day,
And laugh'd at the Roman guards alway :
Fake away!

O god! but it was a jolly spree
For a regular rollicking Romanee :
Nix my dolly, pals! fake away!
Nix my dolly, pals! fake away!
C. N. D.

Sir Charles Morgan, lately deceased, wrote the "Philosophy of Life," and the "Philosophy of Morals." His standard authors were Rabelais and Bayle. He spoke of their works as the good old literature. The writings of the last century recommend themselves most to the genuine atheist. The infidel and religious schools joined in this nineteenth century, to see which could make dupes of each other, and the rest of the world. They decry the coarse irreligion of the past, and rationalism and mysticism alike combine in faith and infidelity. They are men of feeling and of ideas, their fathers very butchers, in giving the naked anatomy of mind, man, and matter. They have various methods of dressing up the truth, in order to deceive the vulgar, and let it peep through to the initiated, whilst they often, in the process, vitiate their own tastes. Those who went before them showed the plain truth in common-place language, and did not scruple to shock prejudices. Those of old might sometimes be forced to conceal the truth from fear of authority, but the "I say unto you," have a respect for the feelings of the people.

AGREEMENT IN FUNDAMENTALS.—In a long speech at a meeting in Liverpool in favour of the factory education bill, the Rev. H. M'Neil thus spoke:—"At a meeting where Mr. Blackburn was in the chair, and where there were Mr. Bevan, Mr. Martineau, Dr. Youens, Mr. Kelly, and Mr. Thom, a certain Mr. Rowland spoke. (Hear.) And Rowland said—(laughter)—'He felt they were united in all that was fundamental, and all that was important,—that they were now assembled upon the same platform, within the common bosom of christianity.' They were all agreed in fundamentals! (Hear, hear.) And what were the fundamentals? (Hear, hear.) Is the trinity fundamental? Mr. Martineau denies it! (Cheers.) Is the incarnation fundamental? Mr. Martineau again denies it! (Loud cheers.) Is the atonement fundamental? Again Mr. Martineau denies it! (Hear and cheers.) Is infant baptism fundamental? Mr. Giles denies it! (Laughter.) Is infant baptism to be opposed? Here is Mr. Bevan who adopts it! Is the one mediator between god and man fundamental? Here is Dr. Youens with a thousand—(hear)—screening himself behind the anti-scriptural figment of a difference between the one mediator of redemption, and the many mediators of intercession! Yet they are all agreed as to the fundamentals! (Cheers.) I will tell you what the real fundamental is, upon which they are agreed—opposition to the established church of England!" (Cheers.)

It is, in the first place, necessary that we distinguish between the means made use of to overthrow despotism, in order to prepare the way for the establishment of liberty, and the means to be used after the despotism is overthrown. The means made use of in the first place are justified by necessity. Those means are, in general, *insurrections*, for whilst the established government of despotism continues in any country, it is scarcely possible that any other means can be used. (Dissertations of first principles of government.)—*Thomas Paine*.

Received, "An Inquiry, *a posteriori*, into the cause of Natural Death," by Dr. S. Rowbotham. Hymns for the Million, No. 4, "The original Jim Crow."

NOTICE.

Nos. 1 and 8 are now in print, and may be obtained by ordering.

Just Published—Price Sixpence.

THE (intended) DEFENCE OF THOS. FINLAY FOR BLASPHEMY, before the High Court of Justiciary, Edinburgh. The proceeds for the benefit of the victims.

Printed and Published by WILLIAM CHILTON, No. 40 Holywell-street, Strand, London.
Saturday, Oct. 7, 1843.

THE
ORACLE OF REASON:
Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

“FAITH’S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE.”

First Editor—Charles Southwell, imprisoned for twelve months and fined £100, for Blasphemy in No. 4.

Second Editor—George Jacob Holyoake, imprisoned for six months, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.

Third Editor—Thomas Paterson, imprisoned for one month, for Blasphemous Placards, in London.

Vendors—George Adams, imprisoned for one month for selling No. 25, in Cheltenham; and

Harriet Adams, his wife, arrested for selling No. 4, in the same town.

No. 96.]

EDITED BY WILLIAM CHILTON.

[PRICE 1D.]

**REPORTS OF DISCUSSION
ON THE EXISTENCE OF GOD,
At Branch A 1 John Street, London.**

As a delay in the appearance of these reports has unavoidably occurred, they have been abridged to enable them to appear in the present number with the notice of the last evening’s discussion.

First Night, Friday, September 15.

Mr. PETER JONES opened the discussion. He regretted that Lloyd Jones was not present to take the affirmative. Paine had written much that was useful to christians, but their prejudices had not allowed them to use it. Mr. J. spoke well in favour of atheism, but mounted Dale Owen’s pivot, and neither affirmed nor denied.

Mr. PRATT spoke of matter. Did it run about wild until it found something with which it formed an organisation? He contended for intelligence, and said that when the design argument was refuted, he should become an atheist.

Mr. KEMP said, that facts, and not *may-be’s*, must be adduced in the arguments. If the world was the opposite of what it is, design writers could be found extolling it to the skies.

Mr. PUDDEFORD declaimed about what matter could not do, as though he had made it—and though a big man, he said he felt very little when talking about the spirit. He sat down as usual, a spiritual curiosity.

Mr. McCULLOUGH reasoned against the watch argument. Said we could not have two infinities, matter and mind. Called on socialists to prove their power god—objected to religion as being entirely pernicious—where the meeting approved.

Mr. HOLYOAKE remarked, that Mr. P. Jones, who had taken *no side*, had sat down calling on parties to take the *opposite*. He (Mr. H.) was an atheist—he believed in no existence distinct from matter. For Mr. Pratt’s benefit, he briefly displayed the refutation of the design argument—and for the guidance of future disputants, explained clearly and briefly the first principles of atheism. Mr. H.’s speech closed the discussion,

Second Night, Sep. 22.

Mr. PRATT resumed the question. Spoke largely of Dr. Paley’s reasoning, which, to him, was satisfactory. Argued against chance, in that sense in which no atheist understands it.

Mr. McCULLOUGH followed in reply. Explained that order and harmony were relative terms, and pointed out some fallacies in Mr. Pratt’s logic.

Mr. PUDDEFORD brought forth Boyle, Locke, &c., who have become theistical stock in trade. He admitted that twenty to one of his audience were infidels, and complimented them by saying they were below the brutes.

Mr. KEMP descanted on the displacement of matter, and matter’s properties, and thought with Plutarch, that it was better to believe in no god, than a vicious one.

Mr. ELLIS, of Stockport, found it most convenient to view the question generally. He thought it unsettleable. He did not believe in the god of the bible. He did not care if others believed in stocks, stones, or monkeys. His god was that UNSEEN, UNKNOWN, and INDEFINABLE, nay, INCONCEIVABLE power, which produced, etc., etc., etc., etc., etc., etc., etc., etc. This gentleman’s speech was much applauded.

Mr. C. T. SMITH complained that Mr. Ellis had forgotten the question—had mistaken the lecture-room for the theatre, and had given bombast for argument.

Mr. P. JONES.—If a sheet of paper covering a magnetised bar of iron be strewed with filings, a zig-zag form will be assumed similar to the work of intelligence. In deciding about harmony *intention* must be proved.

Third Night, Sep. 29.

Mr. HETHERINGTON opened the debate by many useful and striking remarks of an atheistical nature, and waggishly concluded as a goddist, with an adequate *incomprehensible* cause.

Mr. DUNN laughed at Mr. Hetherington’s “adequate cause,” and showed how adequate was nature for the production of intelligence.

Mr. PUDDEFORD was very energetic and very unintelligible.

Mr. DALRYMPLE exposed Mr. Hetherington's indecision and part of Mr. Ellis's remarks on the previous evening.

Mr. LLOYD JONES observed that subjects like the one under discussion require to be handled in a very delicate manner, in deference to the feelings of those who conscientiously hold opinions different to our own. Had heard much of the attributes of god, but with him such attributes were realities without embodiment, without personality. Was a sincere believer in the existence of a power capable of producing all we see, but not in the legs, arms, and so-forth of the christian personification. The most hardy sceptic will not dispute the existence of power capable of doing all that is done, mind or spirit—whether with or apart from matter is at least mysterious. The feelings of devotion created in him by viewing reflectively the operations of nature, are realities in him, and there must be a power in nature or reality in nature to produce this reality in him, and that power or reality he called god, and he believed that without running into absurdity on the right hand or on the left, that his belief was as substantial as that of others whose special object is to command or compel belief in particular gods. The universal assent to the existence of a god shows that there must be a reality to produce so many counterfeits, so much devotional feeling. Uninstructed and coarse minds cannot do with abstractions, therefore require personifications until superseded by education, when superstition will give way for an enlightened and religious appreciation of the powers of nature.

Mr. KEMP did not believe Mr. Jones's god to be one whit more rational than other people's. He believed such discussions did more to destroy goddism than all Mr. J.'s lecturings. Mr. K. successfully exposed the nonsense of Mr. Jones's incomprehensible god.

The hall was crowded as usual, and the growing dissatisfaction of goddism in the branch was more than usually manifest.

Fourth Night, Oct. 7.

Mr. WRIGHT resumed the debate, by observing that if we take pains to look into nature, we should be irresistibly compelled to acknowledge the necessary existence of deity, as compelling the variety of form and hue we behold in all sensible objects. He referred to the argument of a previous evening on design versus adaptation, to show them relative terms—for example, it had been said that the gas-pipes in the room were designed to convey gas, but were also adapted to convey water. He (Mr. W.) would contend that if water were to be conveyed, design would be implied or involved in the action. He added numerous illustrations.

Mr. P. JONES considered, that although

the previous speaker had diffusely illustrated the argument of design, he had entirely failed in proving a designer. He (Mr. P. Jones) was surprised at the course taken by Mr. Lloyd Jones, on a previous evening, who had charged the atheists and their opponents with having said nothing—he himself afterwards saying worse than nothing in support of his own god argument, inasmuch as he had declared his god to be his feelings of admiration at the beauties of nature. Now, are these said beauties of nature intelligent, or are the feelings produced by them intelligent *per se*? Mr. Lloyd Jones will admit they are not—mark what follows, Mr. L. Jones had said that the most hardy sceptic will not deny universal justice—he (Mr. P. Jones) denied it, and moreover affirmed, that as justice is necessarily an emanation of intelligence and personality, Mr. Lloyd Jones has at once transformed his inanimate beauty-god, his unintelligent feeling-god, into a personal-intelligent god.

Mr. G. T. FISHER would try to show reasons for the existence of a god, but would have nothing to do with his attributes. He had been much struck by an observation of Mr. Holyoake's on a previous evening, that admitting all unexplained things to be wonders, we should not jump to the conclusion of a wonder-maker. Now, without jumping to this conclusion, he thought that were the wonders of chemistry and electricity, as far as could be explained, to be brought strikingly home to the feelings of men, it would "lead" them to this conclusion. Although we cannot place god on the dissecting table, and use the scalpel on him, we can a dead body, and see therein wonders to convince us of an intelligent maker.

Mr. McCULLOUGH observed, that if galvanism and electricity were necessary parts of nature, they could not control nature, either in the atom or the aggregate, and anything superintending these had not yet been shown. If a deity had brought us into an atmosphere of nitrous oxide, we should have had natures assimilated to it, and would have considered ourselves lucky in not being placed in such an atmosphere as we now exist in. He could not reconcile the statements of Mr. Owen, that all known facts prove an external or internal cause of all existences—all known facts prove nothing of the kind. Socialists were very tenacious of their own bible, or "outline"—atheists may pull to pieces the Jew-book or koran, but to dissect socialist doctrines and expose socialist errors, sacra Maria, it was so much blasphemy.

Mr. LLOYD JONES rose and said, that he disclaimed the charge insinuated by the last speaker of pandering to vulgar prejudices—that man is illiberal who would quarrel with him for having a different opinion to his own.

He would not quarrel with a man, though their opinions were wide as the poles asunder. He took up an idea of what he perceived in the universe, and he called that idea god. He did not take up the notion of a personal god—he did not mean to say universal justice exists, he did not believe there is any universal existence—what he meant to say was, that the attributes of justice exist in the human mind, and where everywhere admired. Where the judgment corrects the feelings once, the feelings correct the judgment a thousand times. Man's ordinary god is a true reflection of his own coarse mind—when educated his god would be the reflection of his own pure mind—naiads and penates were mere personifications of real ideas—and the figures material have been and continue to be destroyed, yet the ideas remain untouched and invulnerable. The atheist has not solved the difficulty by asserting that power is a property of matter—whether this power is a part of, or apart from, him, he knew not, but he would not willingly yield that imagination which is the charm of our existence. He would not give a farthing for the atheist's world of dry realities—his decayed parsnip with a magot in it.

[Mr. Jones sat down amidst much cheering, which increased upon Mr. Holyoake coming forward to reply. A scene of confusion rarely witnessed here followed, caused by the chairman insisting upon having an affirmative speaker, contending that Mr. L. Jones had spoken only on the general question, and had taken no side—on the other hand, it was contended that Mr. Jones had spoken affirmatively. Mr. L. Jones hoped the discussion would be carried on in a friendly spirit, otherwise he should withdraw from it. After some remarks from the chairman, and some ineffectual endeavours on the part of Mr. Pratt to obtain a hearing, Mr. Holyoake came forward, amidst much cheering.]

Mr. HOLYOAKE said he could not understand why Mr. Jones had styled these discussions quixotic. Mr. Jones set up nothing but theological windmills for the atheist to knock down, and then he called the discussions quixotic—but it was Mr. Jones who made them so. He was a clever prophet who fulfilled his own prophecies. Mr. Jones called the question an unsettleable one. He (Mr. H.) could remember when theism was deemed settled—our discussion had by confession unsettled it, and we should soon demolish it. He would not tolerate the advice that they should discuss with gravity. Let they who felt gravely do it. But it was mounting the mask of hypocrisy for others to do so. *Feeling* was not a sufficient argument in favour of Mr. Jones's god.

The poor Indian, whose untutor'd mind,
Saw god in clouds, or heard him in the wind,
made his belief a matter of feeling. Were they to class Mr. Jones among the "untutored?" Mr. J. believed only in a *principle*, but thousands felt there was a *personal* god—if Mr. Jones's feelings were to satisfy the meeting as to a *principle*, other parties feelings ought to satisfy Mr. J. as to a *personal* god. Mr. H. denied that the atheist was less careful of human affections than Mr. J., and, at the proper time, would prove that they did more to promote happiness. Mr. J. took no side, there was a reason for it. If Mr. J. could support theism, he would. He had abandoned his affirmative position. Mr. H. did not care if Mr. J. was honest or dishonest, his business was with what Mr. J. said, not with what he intended. He called on Mr. Jones to define his god. Was it distinct from matter? Mr. J. had not grappled with the subject. Mr. H. would answer Mr. Fisher. Nobody created electricity. It never was created. It was a property of matter, and matter was eternal. If we knew anything, we knew this. If we were sure of anything we were sure of that.

Mr. McCULLOUGH moved the adj.

PROPHECIES.

PAUL, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, chapter ten, tells them that they should not be ignorant of the Jewish history. He begins with Moses and relates his adventures, and says of them, verse 11, "Now all these things happened unto them for *ensamples*: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the *ends* of the world are come." The admonition I should seek, judging of "invisible by visible things," would be that I had arrived at the end, when I saw the creator. Exodus xxxiii. Certainly it was beginning at the end with master Moses, and if Paul had preached this doctrine to me I should have supposed his god had typified the "ends of the world," by showing his own ends. Paul makes the whole body a type of the church, and in illustration of its inferior members evidently alludes to the revelation given to Moses (Exodus chap. xx xiii.), in more decent terms than Moses used, Cor. xii., 23, 24, "And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness; for our comely parts have no need: but *god* hath tempered the body together, *having given* more abundant honour to *that part which lacked*." In Paul's second epistle to Timothy, the apostle praises him for having, from a child, known this remarkable *feature* in the christian religion. "The holy scriptures," says he, "are able to make thee wise unto salva-

tion through faith which is in Jesus Christ. *All scripture is given by inspiration of god, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.* This fundamental article of belief, therefore, is an inseparable adjunct of christianity, it is not only a type, but we are to make doctrine out of so prominent a fact, and apply it to purposes of reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness.

There are few, I dare say, who do not wince at the recollection of the literal fulfilment of Paul's words, and have had their faith in the fundamental principle of religion reduced to practice, when smarting under the application of the rod. "Spare the rod and spoil the child," and let not the "soul spare for his crying," says the lord, and as Zipporah said to Moses, a bloody husband art thou to me, so may we say of god, a bloody god art thou, crucifying young innocents on those parts which are types of thyself. Many a believer when young has no doubt carried about this bloody sacrifice in his own person. But no doubt he received the consolation of Timothy, and saw in the atonement of his own peccadilloes, the sacrifice of god for our sins. Under the only form which god the father ever showed himself to mankind, and the only part according to sight we have in common with our creator, the prophetically vile and rejected of men, it was fulfilling in its sufferings the mysteries of religion. Not only god himself was each time sacrificed, but a small part of the person was made a vicarial sacrifice of the whole, to signify that one suffered for all the rest of mankind.

When seen with the eyes of faith, that the part crucified under the birch, was a figure of the crucified redeemer, he would see in the twigs sticking in him the crown of thorns applied to his saviour, the mosaic dispensation emerging from its obscurity behind, turned afterwards into the glory of the whole man before. The believer suffers in the first appearance, god did in his second coming, the branches of grace are but hanging to him, when the whole tree in the cross was affixed to god. I am happy to think that Jesus did not die wholly on the cross, but that it may be supposed, from the type, that he himself was only a personification of his father as he showed himself to Moses. That therefore he only really suffered in that part which was intended from all time to suffer, and the application of which the punishment has been sanctioned by the concurrent testimony of holy writ and universal practice. We arrive therefore at the satisfactory conclusion, that the son of god and the son of man suffered no more than many other little children, who roar like Jesus did on the cross under the infliction of the birch.

It was shown that it was equally necessary for the son of god as for the son of man, when the former had taken upon himself the latter character, to suffer the castigation of youth before he could go home to his father, play the part of a full-grown god, and take upon himself the business of heaven. This at once points out the analogy there is between little children and the subjects of the kingdom of heaven, they take up their cross, and like lambs they are sacrificed. We confess we pity the Jews—without a new Jew-book to explain the old, what head and scarcely any tail can they make out of this extraordinary revelation to Moses. Now it is all simple to christians, and if I had not this key to the Jew-book I should think the whole a cheat of the devil. I should have been inclined to say Moses must have been deceived, and as Satan once appeared as a serpent, here he is again just like himself, and surely Moses is not going to play the fool like his first parents in the garden. Surely such a *mask* is no disguise, and if real serpents could not walk upright or talk, surely such a representation cannot play all the parts in the performance of god. If Moses had been well acquainted with his own works he would have naturally thought the devil was come to tempt him as he did Adam and Eve and Jesus. He would have thought, O lord help me, here is the enemy of mankind, bearing the standard of Sodom and Gomorrah, and talking with all the face imaginable. But it is the old story, Moses was just as curious, he wished to eat of the tree of knowledge, he fell into as familiar conversation with this new form of hell as Eve did with the Old Serpent. He yields to temptation, desires to see god face to face, which is life, and he gets as before nothing but death, though many will see resurrection and life everlasting, as emblematic of its operations.

Thus might fallible, unregenerate human nature have reasoned, if it had not learnt from St. Paul to interpret the invisible by visible things, in the likeness of one thing to see the likeness of all, and from god's infinity, shown in one instance by such a finite object, to judge that all the rest of revelation was included in it. All those fulfilments, which the tender christian contemplates in the body of his redeemer on the cross, the passion of his saviour, the sacrament of the body and blood, are all to be found, and were comprised beforehand in this simple original. It was probably in allusion to this that some thinking christians called the bible, the breeches bible, and published it under that title. All the contents of the sacred volume are certainly to be contained in that portion of wearing apparel inexpressible to ears polite, which god threw aside when he showed his behind to Moses, and

again when he was crucified in presence of his people Israel. I will only refer to a few more points of resemblance, I will not destroy the pleasure which christians must have in working out the rest of this beautiful analogy through nature and religion. The destroying angel passed over those of the Israelites who had marked their door-posts with blood. Thus does flagellation pass over the sign of the deity we bear in our bodies, and mark us for salvation. We assist at the feast as children, which when we are grown up is performed for us, once for all, by god himself, when he took the place of the paschal lamb, gave his bloody self to save the rest, and bear the punishment of our sins. Thus did god pass over Moses, and save him from the consequences of seeing his glory, when he hid him in the rock, and exposed his person in the thoroughfare. Dreadful it would be for the Jews when they should see all of him, as they did on the cross. The former was, as Paul calls it, the baptism of the cloud, changed into the baptism of blood. But what I conceive to be the crowning miracle of all, and which is deducible from this passage in Exodus, is, that not only a virgin produced a child, but the back parts produced a son. W. J. B

THEORY OF REGULAR GRADATION.

XLVII.

I HAVE traced in my various articles, the transmutation of species, or the *blending* of one animal into another, the growing out of, or changing of, one form into another. I commenced with the fossils found in the different geological strata of the earth, and showed, that not only were simple forms associated with more complex ones, but that the simplest forms of animals were contemporaneous with the lowest, or earliest strata, and that, as we proceed upwards from the granites to the tertiary, the number of complex forms increase, until at last, upon the tertiary strata, we find man, associated, however, with forms as simple as those found in the lowest strata. The first evidences of animal life, the sponges and zoophytes, would scarcely be discoverable but for chemical analysis. From the sponges and zoophytes, we next proceed to either the articulata or mollusca, both of which exhibit some points of resemblance to the class above and below them—in both articulata and mollusca are animals much superior to the *lowest* vertebrata, and in both, also, we find species which are in many respects below the *highest* radiata. Here we see one of the facts for which Lamarck contends—the blending of animals one into the other, so as to defy the discovery of *distinct* species. In the mollusca

we find a near approach to the cartilaginous fishes, or the lowest order of fishes. In the lowest class of the vertebrata (fishes) we find the first type of the shoulder blade, bone of the upper arm, bones of the fore or lower arm, bones of the wrist, the os hyoides, this latter reaching a high degree of development, and many other approximations to higher orders, as well as assimilations to lower ones. After fishes come the amphibia—but here we have scarcely any advance upon fishes—they connect fishes with reptiles. In the reptilia, we meet with a still higher grade of development than in the amphibia, both in the skeleton, the viscera, and other parts of the system. Next in order come birds, in which the approaches towards the human type are very numerous. At last we arrive at the mammalia, or the class to which man belongs. This class contains thirteen orders, and the approximation of each to the human type is proportioned to the distance naturalists have assigned it from that standard. The dolphin and whale, although inhabitants of the great deep, present many points of resemblance to man—not only from the peculiar circumstance of their suckling their young, by means of mammae, or teats, but also in respect of their osseous system.

That there is a regularity in the succession of the strata of the earth, is not disputed, and the lower or earliest formations are considered to be more crude and simple than the later or highest deposits. In the vegetable world the plants are classed according to the simplicity or complexity of their structure—so also, in the animal kingdom, men are guided by the same rule in determining the order of arrangement. But although whilst thus employed, men begin with those phenomena which are of so doubtful a character as to divide opinion upon their real nature—although they proceed step by step, by almost imperceptible degrees from one form of being to another—although they perceive throughout all their investigations no other agent in operation but matter—notwithstanding that their most minute search after a principle independent of matter, has ended in disappointment—still, do they pertinaciously and dogmatically insist that such a principle *is* in existence, and that the various operations of nature could not be carried on without it. To *disprove* this assertion is impossible, but all facts are opposed to its *probability*. Immaterialists, aware of the weakness of their position, cunningly demand of materialists a disproof of *their* assumption—such a challenge should never be heeded, it is sufficient to show its utter absurdity and untenableness. To attempt positively to demonstrate the non-existence of an immaterial principle, that “directs the atom and controls the

aggregate of nature," is waste of time—but a few facts in illustration of the folly of such a belief may not be ill-timed.

The foundation of atheism is materialism, that is, the doctrine of the infinite extension, and eternal duration of matter. The atheist rejects as puerile the idea of the *creation*, either of matter or its modes. Accepting reason alone as his guide, he follows wherever she leads, and halts where she halts. Reason teaches that that which cannot be destroyed, can never have been created, and as matter cannot be destroyed, it can never have been created—hence all the modes or forms of matter which we see, must have been derived from matter's inherent, unassisted properties. The same principle which produces the cohesion of particles in a stone, causes the moon to revolve round the earth, and the earth round the sun—causes the sap to ascend the plant, and the blood to circulate through the veins and arteries of an animal—why the results should be so different we cannot tell, but that they are so we know.

Religionists, on the other hand, are compelled, to be consistent, to contend for a *bona-fide* absolute creation of matter out of nothing, for the obvious reason, that if matter was *not* created, its properties were not given to it, for its properties cannot be detached from it—we know matter's properties, but not matter itself. If matter was not created, the various forms and modes of its existence which we see around us, may reasonably be supposed to result from matter's action. Motion is a property of matter, matter has eternally existed, matter then must have been eternally in motion—must have been eternally changing its modes and forms of existence, exhibiting an infinite variety of shapes and phenomena.

Materialism being the foundation of atheism, the idea of a superior being or power, who directs and controls, manufactures and keeps in order, the infinite variety of forms and phenomena displayed in the universe is necessarily rejected, and the atheist has to seek for reasons for what he sees, in what he believes can alone be the cause, namely, the properties of matter. Satisfied with explaining visible effects, he never dreams of solving final causes—hence, in this series of articles, an attempt has been made to show the reasonableness of the belief that animal organisms have derived their existence from matter's action, and not from the manipulation or conjuration of an immaterial spirit, or being, called god.

Just Published—Price Sixpence.

THE (intended) DEFENCE OF THOS. FINLAY FOR BLASPHEMY, before the High Court of Justiciary, Edinburgh. The proceeds for the benefit of the victims.
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THE SCOTCH GOD WAR.

The following is extracted from the *Gateshead Observer*, of Sep. 23, under the head of "Notes of a Truant Tourist:"

"By the bye, there was a meeting held in the Waterloo Rooms, Edinburgh, last week (the Lord Provost in the chair), to give public expression to sympathy with Dr. Kalley, a Scotch gentleman of the medical profession, who has for some time devoted himself to the preaching of the gospel in Madeira, and who, it is said, has been imprisoned by the Portuguese authorities of the island, as a 'heretic' and 'blasphemer.' Dr. Candlish, who was the chief speaker, described Dr. Kalley as a benevolent physician, who had ministered long and freely to the bodies and souls of the islanders. He distributed the sacred scriptures, and preached periodically in an apartment of his house, accommodating 400 persons. He was commanded to desist from preaching, and, on his refusal to obey, was prosecuted at law. The result was a decision in his favour (from which it would seem that protestants enjoy more liberty in catholic Madeira, than do the episcopalians in England, or the free church in Scotland; for the former may not have preachings in a private house, and the latter may not have a place of worship on the broad lands of the Duke of Sutherland). Some time after the decision in Dr. Kalley's favour, he was cast into prison—why and wherefore, Dr. Candlish could not clearly explain. At the close of his speech, the doctor dwelt emphatically on popery, and reprobated, very wisely and justly, the inclination of certain whigs and tories, in the present day, to extend the stipendiary support of the state to the catholic priests of Ireland. But Dr. Candlish is only opposed to this measure, because he thinks the roman catholics to be in error. He would have the state to discriminate between what is true and what is false in religion, and to 'establish' the former. But the state must come to the same conclusions as Dr. Candlish, or their conclusions will be false! Would it not be better, good doctor, to spare the state all trouble in the matter? Well! when Dr. Candlish had made his motion, and it had been seconded by councillor James Duncan, a Mr. Jeffery, whom the newspapers term a socialist, came forward to speak. This was the signal for instant uproar and confusion. You are aware that certain parties in Edinburgh, who are so unfortunate as to recognise no divinity in the christian religion, and who have outraged the feelings of christians in Scotland, have been prosecuted and punished for 'blasphemy.' These men were anxious, it would appear, on Monday night, to show

that the catholics of Madeira were just doing the same thing to the protestants of that island, that the christians of Edinburgh had been doing to the unbelievers. But the christians would not hear them, and, when they persisted in breaking in upon the pre-concerted order of the meeting, handed them over to the custody of the police. The proceedings were then brought to a close. It is to be deprecated that such a course should have been pursued towards those opponents of christianity. It placed the christians in the wrong—it exposed them to an imputation of inconsistency—and had a tendency to injure the cause of truth. The *Witness*—the organ of a church which complains of persecution—taunts the socialists with their poverty—a strange taunt to proceed from a christian—a professing disciple of him ‘who had not where to lay his head!’ Jeffery’s supporters, says the *Witness*, ‘cheered and waved their hats—as many, at least, as had them.’ At last, adds your contemporary, Jeffery was ‘bundled off, to pick out the softest deal in the police-office, in which to pass the night!’ The Rev. W. L. Alexander, too, is reported to have spoken of the socialists as ‘fellows with more brass in their faces than in their pockets!’ All this is very bad, and especially from men who call themselves christians.”

I differ from the gentleman in this particular—deeming christianity to be the very cause of such conduct.

PROSECUTION OF McNEIL!

ATHEISTICAL RAMBLINGS.

I.

IN consequence of the arrest of John Mc Neil, of Glasgow, by the authorities of Stirling, for the vending of blasphemy, and being animated by a desire to supply the inhabitants of Campsie with that food which had been debarred them by the Rev. Robert Lee of that village, the “Man Paterson,” and myself, armed to the teeth with every weapon that infidelity has forged, sallied forth early last week, to have a worry with the bigots of Dumbartonshire. Our operations were confined, however, to a very small portion of the shire—but like the pebble that is dropped into the lake, we sent from our encampment the magic circle of truth, which shall expand its ring until every hamlet in the country is encompassed within its circumference. Kerkintilloch and Campsie were the villages wherein we made our *debut*. The former is on the line of the Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway, distant from Edinburgh about 30 miles, with a population of 2 or 3000—the latter lies three miles farther north, with a similar population, which is principally employed in large printfields in the neighbourhood.

There is nothing remarkable about Kerkintilloch, except that the Union Canal, passing through the principal street, breaks the monotony that pervades the place. Campsie, on the other hand, possesses the advantage of a situation more beautiful than poetry can express. It is there that commerce has been shorn of its harshness—that the clanking of machinery is softened by the warbling of the feathered songsters of the grove—that the precipitous rock protects the tiny factory from winter’s pitiless storm—that the huge chimney-stalk rears its naked trunk beside the well-clad oak and lofty pine, vomiting, in fitful mood, the curling smoke, envious of the mountain mists—’tis there that the work-bell rings but to rouse a thousand echoes from surrounding heights, making the workman’s toil musically sweet—that commerce may be seen enrobed in richest drapery of romance. The vale of Campsie is, indeed, the loveliest of vales! But more of this anon.

We left Edinburgh on Tuesday afternoon, having previously resolved to go all the way to Glasgow, that the friends there might be consulted upon the object of our mission. On our arrival, after two hours’ travelling, we met our excellent friend, and honest atheist, Mr. Henry Jeffery, social missionary. Having evolved our plan of attack to that gentleman, it met with an “approving nod,” and he volunteered to join our ranks forthwith. This was assented to, and on Wednesday afternoon we were whirled by railway to the village of Kerkintilloch. In that place we spent an hour or two preparing for battle: met at the gloaming, walked quietly through the village with our bill-sticking implements, by the aid of which the gates and walls of the place were in a very short time decorated with “typical tid-bits” from the *Jew-book*,” contained in a large placard, with a woodcut at the top. “The Man Paterson’s” advertisements were also thickly posted, along with “Homethrusts,” “Rolls and Treacle,” “Godology,” &c. This accomplished, we wended our way towards Campsie, the moon throwing her soft rays at our feet and waiting faithfully on us as we trotted on our march to post a few bills on this gate or that large birch tree by the way side. In this way did we employ ourselves on the road to Campsie, where we found ourselves at 9 p.m. One of our friends met us at the entrance of the village, and led the way to one of those houses where accomodation may be found for “man and beast.” Here, after satisfying the “inward man,” we replenished our ammunition-bag, and, under the guidance of our active friend, played the same game in Campsie as we had done in Kerkintilloch. This terminated our *nocturnal freaks*.

Next morning, after walking into a

THE ORACLE OF REASON.

"Scotch breakfast," the "Man" and I came forth with our stock of publications upon the very spot where friend McNeil was apprehended. The "stall" on which our books were displayed was a low, broad wall, about three feet in height, situated in the greatest thoroughfare of the village. Our appearance cleared up the mystery of the placards, about which the inhabitants had been puzzling themselves for some hours, and set all the beldames of the village cackling like geese. Between the hours of nine and ten the workmen of the place crowded round our stall amazed at the boldness of the exhibition. Small cards, advertising the works, lay here and there. The following are *fac similes* of two of them:

(No. 1.)—"Repeal of the Corn Laws! 'Rolls and Treacle' for the Unemployed of Campsie!"

(No. 2.)—"Fencing for the Million! Lesson First: A Home-thrust at the Atrocious Trinity! Price one penny."

W. BUDGE.

(To be continued.)

HYMNS FOR THE MILLION—No. 4.

THE ORIGINAL JEM CROW.

Air, "Jem Crow."

I SING to the praise and glory
Of a little Jew named Joe,
Whom some folks nickname Jesus Christ:
Don't you do so.
But wheel about, turn about, do just so:
Every time you speak of him, call him Joe!

When he was but a little child,*
He made some birds of clay,
He made the clay-birds eat and drink,
He made them fly away.
Wheel about, turn about, do just so:
A mighty little conjuror was this young Joe.

They took him to the synagogue
When he was twelve years old;
And all the bearded parsons there
He regularly sold.
Wheel about, turn about, do just so:
Now was'n't he a clever kid, this young Joe?

In Cana of Galilee,
All at a marriage feast,
He turn'd the water into wine,
And got drunk as a beast.†
He wheel'd about and turn'd about, he did
just so:
And Father Matthew‡ he stood by and wink'd
at Joe.

He went into the stock-exchange,
And with a knotted whip,
He drove the "bulls" and "bears" about
And smote them "thigh and hip."

Wheel about, turn about, do just so.
O, Christ, he made them "waddle" well,
did brave young Joe.

With five loaves and a little fish
He fed five thousand men:
They'll make him one of the poor-law kings
If he should come again.
Wheel about, and starve 'em out, and do
just so,
But he gave them a bellyful—did our young
Joe.

He met his friend the devil once,
A taking of a walk;
He sent him into a herd of swine
And spoiled all the pork.
Tear about, and grunt about, and do just so:
Pretty pork he made of it: gallus young Joe.

A going to Jerusalem,
Two donkeys Joey stole:
And like Ducrow, both cruppers strode—
The ass and the ass's foal.
Wheel about and turn about, do just so,
They gave him six weeks at the mill.§
Alas, poor Joe!

Then he kicked up a shindy,
And could'n't hold his mag:
So they had him 'fore the beaks again,
And jugged him for a lag.¶
Wheel about, and turn about, and do just so,
He'll nab it if he comes again, poor young
Joe! J.C.

* See Gospel of the Infancy.

† See St. John for that matter.

‡ Father Matthew was an evangelican publican
in those days.

§ Apocryphal Gospels. ¶ Ibid.

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For the London Anti-Persecution Union.

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NEXT WEEK.

THE FALLEN STAR; or THE HISTORY OF A FALSE RELIGION.

By Sir E. L. Bulwer.

NOTICE.

Nos. 1 and 3 are now in print, and may be obtained by ordering.

Printed and Published by WILLIAM CHILTON,
No. 40 Holywell-street, Strand, London.
Saturday, Oct. 14, 1843.

THE
ORACLE OF REASON:
Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

“FAITH’S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE.”

First Editor—Charles Southwell, imprisoned for twelve months and fined £100, for Blasphemy in No. 4.
Second Editor—George Jacob Holyoake, imprisoned for six months, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.
Third Editor—Thomas Paterson, imprisoned for one month, for Blasphemous Placards, in London.
Vendors—George Adams, imprisoned for one month for selling No. 25, in Cheltenham; and
Harriet Adams, his wife, arrested for selling No. 4, in the same town.

No. 97.]

EDITED BY WILLIAM CHILTON.

[PRICE 1D.]

REPEAL BY ASSASSINATION.

THE interest excited by the discussion of the above question in these pages—evinced by the increased sale—induces me, contrary to my previous intention, once more to say a few words upon the subject, noticing, at the same time, the communications of Diagoras Atheos and Charles Dent. I have reason to believe that many persons who, originally, were much opposed to the idea of any other force but moral force, or any other power but the power of gentleness, for eradicating the ills of society—have been induced, in consequence of the arguments and evidence furnished by W.J.B. and myself, to suspect the truth of their previous opinions, & to doubt the infallibility of their favourite remedy. I do not say that we have convinced them—that is more than I expect—but to have caused them to think, and to look with a less prejudiced eye upon the dark side of the picture, is a great deal gained, and deserves not to be lightly treated or neglected, lest a relapse should take place, and all our labour be in vain. For, though, as a mere matter of opinion, I am quite indifferent whether others agree with me or not—yet, as a great principle, involving the happiness of millions—as a question of morality, clear and well defined—I am anxious to obtain the suffrages of others in its favour, and where I may venture, without tiring my readers, will notice the objections that may be brought against the principle of assassination, as advocated by W. J. B. and myself.

Every one has heard of the drummer who could not please the man whom he was flogging. If the drummer struck high, it was too high—and if he struck low, it was too low; compelling him at last to declare, that do what he would, in the striking way, he could not give satisfaction. Now, really, without offence, Diagoras Atheos and Charles Dent appear to me very much like the man who was being flogged—use what arguments we might or how we might, W. J. B. and myself cannot please them.

In No. 78 it was contended by W. J. B. that so long as the world was governed by physical force, the same force must always be resorted to, to obtain just rights and real liber-

ties for the people—also, that the Irish protestant church was the chief cause of the present, and all previous, disaffection in that country—and that the wisest course for the Irish to pursue would be to murder, or assassinate, some few of the protestant parsons, as a warning for the rest to leave the country and their possessions, the only means by which tranquility could be restored to the distracted and impoverished inhabitants. But it was also provided, or recommended, in the event of the better sort of protestant parsons not taking the hint, that they likewise should be similarly disposed of—half measures being rightly considered worse than no measures. This most horribly shocked “A Coventry Socialist Lecturer,” was considered to be “impolitic” by G. J. H., and startled from their propriety Henry Jeffery, and other friends to atheism in Glasgow, who were astonished at “the coolness with which murder was advised.”

In reply to the Coventry Lecturer directly, and all other objectors indirectly, W. J. B. adduced a number of arguments and authorities in support of the general principle of the morality of a people resorting to physical force to redress their grievances—and also a number of facts illustrative of the good which had resulted from the application of the particular description of physical force recommended by him to the people of Ireland.

In No. 86 I published my entire concurrence in the recommendation of W. J. B.—defended the general principle involved, as well as the particular application of that principle to Ireland, backing my opinion of its efficacy by an extract from the letter of an ardent Irish reformer, Patrick O’Higgins. But all this has failed to produce conviction in the minds of two at least of the supporters of the *Oracle*—Diagoras Atheos and Charles Dent. Diagoras Atheos conceives “W. J. B.’s line of argument is unworthy of him as an atheist,” and that his “Historical researches are doubtless very instructive, merely as such, but in the way of argument they amount to nothing.” Charles Dent asks, “But how does the projector (W. J. B.) defend his sentiment? chiefly by raking from the pages of doubtful and partisan history, and culling from the speeches of partisan parliamentary

declaimers—but though such instances and authorities were never so numerous, they, the writers and speakers, were by no means professed oracles of reason, or vindicators of philosophy.”

From the writings of these gentlemen it will be seen, that what has hitherto been considered the safest guide for humanity, namely, the experience of the past, passes for nothing, or less than nothing, and weighs not as dust in the balance. Ardently desiring, and zealously labouring to produce a more safe and happy constitution of society than the world has hitherto witnessed, they reject with scorn and indignation the resort to any of the modes of reform which have hitherto been found of service in such states of society *in which we now exist*. They are for using those means *only* which we imagine will be resorted to when men have entirely changed their present habits and ideas—utterly regardless of their total inapplicability to our present wants and institutions.

Men have never yet been governed by reason—when they are, reason alone will be sufficient to produce the changes which reason might dictate as necessary. When we are in Rome we must do as Romans do—or take the consequences—and so long as club law is triumphant, malcontents must either oppose force to force, or submit to have their brains dashed out, if they will grumble. Every one is at liberty to pursue what course he pleases when suffering from oppression. I have stated my feelings and convictions, and Diagoras Atheos his—but I do not see the justice of denouncing my opinions as unworthy of a man or degrading to philosophy, simply because the objector is willing to submit to any and every tyranny, rather than shed blood in self-defence. As a question of policy, it is, in my opinion, most unsound, and as a principle of action most immoral. Diagoras Atheos, in No. 92, speaking of my reply to him, says, “You look *backward*—I look *forward*—you style me visionary and cloud-clapt—and I you, short-sighted and smoke-enveloped. Look at the world as it is, eh? and, I suppose, imitate it—quarrel, fight, shoot, stab, rob, pilfer, and, finally, make fools of ourselves, and all because the world does so. No, whilst I look at the world as it is, I will not forego the contemplation of what it *might* be—and, as I hope, *will* be.” Neither will I—in fact, I question much whether Diagoras Atheos or myself would have the heart to attempt any reforms if we were not emboldened by the thoughts of what the world *might* be, and encouraged by the hope of what the world *will* be, even before we become unconscious of its passing scenes.

When I said “look at the world as it is,” it was that we might learn the cause of its distempers, and apply an adequate remedy,

and not that we should inoculate ourselves with its diseases. The maladies of present and previous society are, in my opinion, mainly attributable to the apathy of the multitude, and their hatred of physical force. If I look *backward*, I also look *forward*, and do not *over-look* the present when thinking of the future. The world has hitherto been governed by force and fraud—these instruments of barbarity and tyranny are gradually giving way—but *they are not yet gone*, as evidenced by the increase of our police, prisons, and churches. What would be the most merciful treatment, and the most sound policy towards the monsters who could design, the monsters who could adopt, and the monsters who could execute the duties in such an ingenious hell as the model prison of Pentonville? Some men could never be reformed, and these, I should think, are of the number.

Experience, though thrown away upon Charles Dent and Diagoras Atheos, may not be considered equally worthless by others—and the good likely to result from a recent case of assassination, might, with propriety, be cited by me as an argument in favour of the principle for which W. J. B. and myself contend. Some time previous to the 11th of Aug. last, a private of the 5th Fusileers died from excessive fatigue, caused by over drill. On the 11th of Aug. another private of the 5th, named George Jubee, shot the adjutant, who was the cause of the excessive drill of which the soldiers complained—Jubee, on being asked if it was he who committed the murder, said, “Yes—I might as well be hung, as killed by drill.” The opinion of the wanton cruelty of the adjutant, in enforcing such excessive drill is so general, that I have not seen one single instance of unqualified denunciation of the soldier’s conduct in any of the papers I have looked into. The *Dispatch*, while deprecating the conduct of the soldier, declared that it hoped it would act as a *warning* to the other martinets of the army. The verdict of the jury was, “That private Jubee, of the 5th Fusileers, did kill and murder Adjutant Robertson Mackay, of the said corps; BUT the jury is of opinion, that the *majority* of the men of said regiment are both *murmuring at* and *suffering from* the drills and parades which they have daily to undergo. They, therefore (the jury), recommend that the proper authorities will institute a strict and searching inquiry into these matters.” And I have since read that, *in consequence of this assassination*, the commander-in-chief has resolved to establish a uniform system of drill for the whole force, placing it out of the power of any cruel tyrants to wantonly torture those subject to them. If this be true, here is an unexpected good resulting from this *very commendable* act of the soldier. To have frightened the

other brutes in the army would have been doing a great deal of good, and this undoubtedly it would have done—but to lead to the establishment of a better system generally, upon a sure foundation, is a regular god-send.

There must be hundreds and thousands of men in England who sympathise with Jubee, and who think the adjutant was very properly treated—but they would hesitate to say so publicly. These feelings are mine, and I have no doubt W. J. B.'s, also—it may be indiscreet, but it is only honest in me to acknowledge it.

I hope those who read these remarks will well consider them, before they decide against the writer or the writing. W. C.

THE SCOTCH GOD WAR.

PROSECUTION OF McNEIL!

ATHEISTICAL RAMBLINGS.

II.

A FEW of the more bold among the crowd occasionally ventured a purchase. Back numbers of the *Oracle* sold well—particularly No. 91, which was labelled the “Lee Oracle.” About noon, the constable of the village—a low rascal, named *Maines*—sneaked to the “stall,” and, after surveying our collection, purchased from me Nos 67, 70, 85, and 86, of the *Oracle*. After tendering payment, he timidly said, “I suppose you know who I am?” Upon receiving my assurance that his person was wholly unknown to me, he gave his name, and added, that the purchase which had been made was under authority of the fiscal. “O, ho!” said I, “you had better take a copy of ‘God versus Paterson’—I’ll make it threepence to you.” But the constable was not to be done. Whether it was that the fourpence expended upon *Oracles* was all the *tin* the authorities could raise that morning, or whether it arose from a meritorious desire to prevent an increase of the national debt, I will not pretend to aver, but “true it is, and of a verity,” that *Mr. M.* declined availing himself of my handsome offer. I would have presented it gratis to the fiscal’s “jackall,” in name of the “Union,” but have strong objections to “casting pearls” you know where. After the restoration of *Mr. Maines*’s equilibrium, he modestly said, “I’ll take your name, if you please,” at the same time drawing from a greasy pocket, a still more greasy pocket-book, and, in the right hand, flourishing a ha’penny worth of black lead. “You are very obliging,” replied I, “my name is *Boz.*” Down went the pencil on a dirty leaf of the aforesaid pocket-book, and, after a five minutes’ struggle with the intricate figure of a capital “B,” and two or three more minutes consumed in the formation of an

“o” and two “s’s,” my name, for the nounce, stood thus: “Boss.”

“Where do you reside?” was the next query. “Everywhere, I am a flying stationer,” was the reply. “Oh! but what particular place do you reside at?” “Any-where,” was the answer. At this juncture *Mr. Jeffery* (unaware who was addressing me) came forward, and was about joining the conversation, when *Mr. Maines* inquired of *Mr. J.* where he resided. “I do not know,” replied *Jeffery*, “at this moment I may be likened to the *Son of Man*, I have not where to lay my head.” “Oh, then,” said *Maines*, “we’ll perhaps find lodgings for you to-night,” and immediately thereafter “turned and left the spot.” It would have been a finished tableau had he “leant upon his baton and wiped away a tear!”

After such a flourish of trumpets from the head-constable of the parish, one would have thought that, like the “walls of Jericho,” we would ere night have been on a level with the dust. But no, the solitary parish clock tolled hour after hour, as I thought with greater regularity, and more loudly than usual, as if desirous of awakening *Maines* to a sense of duty—still no constable was forthcoming.

At two o’clock the bellman of the village was hired to announce that *Mr. Jeffery* would address the inhabitants immediately. In half an hour hundreds had congregated in the principal street, and listened with profound attention and respect to an eloquent address from *Mr. J.* on the subject of prosecution for opinion’s sake. The address lasted about half an hour, and the auditors, one and all, seemed to have been powerfully impressed with what they had just heard. In short, “*Mr. Jeffery*’s address” was the village theme up to the hour of our departure, and cannot fail being productive of great good to freedom’s cause.

After dinner we took upon ourselves to call on the Rev. *Mr. Lee*. The manse lies about two miles from the village of Campsie. Imagine a fine semicircular range of hills, some of which, resembling the mountains of Switzerland, are cultivated to the summit. The dell, or “clachan,” formed by this range is beautifully picturesque: the village lying at the entrance sloping gently upwards on each side. Beyond this, beautiful clumps of trees, running waters, and the placid pool. Here and there a pretty whitewashed cottage showing itself between the interstices of the umbrageous plantain; and, beyond all, the solitary two-storied manse, haughtily sending forth its smoke in the centre of the well-cultivated glebe—forcibly reminding one of the profession of its occupant. The highest hill of the range frowns upon the dwelling of the man of god, like the genius of truth

threatening to crush the demon of error. Picture these things to the imagination, and you have a faint idea of the "clachan."

After dinner, then, we called upon the Rev. Mr. Lee. Our object in doing so was to invite that reverend person to a genuine cup of "Captain Pidding," in the "Tontine," but, as fate would have it, Mr. Lee was not at home. Determined, however, to leave behind us a memento of our anxiety to have an interview, Mr. Jeffery left the following note :

"The Rev. Robt. Lee, minister of Campsie.

"Sir.—Having heard of the incarceration, at your instance, of a young man, named McNeil, charged with vending works of a liberal character, a few gentlemen from Edinburgh, and elsewhere, have been in the village of Campsie endeavouring to ascertain the feeling of the inhabitants on the question, and from that inquiry have arrived at the conclusion that nothing short of your meeting me in public debate, on the various questions involved in your, to me, most outrageous, though *christian*, conduct, must take place. I now beg, then, in the most respectful manner to challenge you publicly to discuss the question, 'Is the christian religion true, and its tendency beneficial?'

"I beg to subscribe myself, reverend sir, yours, &c., HENRY JEFFERY.

"Campsie, Oct. 5th, 1843."

This note was left for the rev. gentleman in his own parlour, and we returned to Campsie, with the intention of displaying our stall by torch-light during the evening, as day-light was now slowly drawing on her sable mantle. We scoured the village in vain, searching for a torch, and were at last compelled to show our books by the light of the moon. At seven o'clock the print-fields vomited their myriads of toil-worn artisans. They crowded round the stall, and, seizing the opportunity, I began to sell *Oracles of Reason* by Dutch auction. Handful after handful found its way to the crowd, and after a brisk sale of one hour we brought the siege of Campsie to a termination.

W. BUDGE.

(To be continued)

REPORTS OF DISCUSSION ON THE EXISTENCE OF GOD,

At Branch A 1, John Street, London.

FIFTH NIGHT.

THE chairman having read the minutes of the last evening from the *Oracle*, made some observations relative to the confusion which had then taken place, saying, that it had been a rule to allow parties to speak to the general question, for the purpose of gaining all the information possible on the subject under discussion, and believed that such latitude

was more beneficial than otherwise—stated his determination to act, as hitherto, with the strictest impartiality, and as Mr. L. Jones had desired to speak to the question generally, so had he been allowed, as had Mr. Ellis previously.

Mr McCULLOUGH thought that speakers should take the affirmative or the negative of any question submitted for discussion, otherwise, instead of an inquiry about god, we might perhaps be edified with a discourse on brick-making, or breeches-making. This might be called the age of controversy, there is now no subject too abstruse, no subject too sacred for popular investigation, and the one under consideration was the most important of all, as it affects the human race—agreed with Lloyd Jones, that the god of the bible was the counterpart of the Jewish mind—is man prone to irritability, so is the Jew god : "let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them"—to propitiate this god, blood must be shed, but it was the blood of bulls and goats, the christian god was so much the worse, as requiring human blood, nay, the blood of an only son. As to the universality of the god-idea, Mr. McC. would ask why, if the deity implanted this idea in the mind of man, is the idea different in every different individual, sometimes a stone, a serpent, or calabash? Mr. Lloyd Jones had asked, would not atheists, with their dry, cold reasoning, destroy the blissful feelings of our nature? Yes, when such blissful feelings lead to death—as the traveller in a snowy region would give all he possessed for a minute's sleep, would another not be acting honestly in warning him of his danger, and preventing, if possible, the certain fatal result? Just so fatal to man's true interests is religion—and it is the atheist's duty to rouse its victims from their torpor. Mr. McCullough assured Mr. Jones he had the highest respect for him, and confessed himself converted from wesleyanism by him some years since at Manchester, therefore had been surprised to hear Mr. Jones say he would take the affirmative of this question.

Mr. PRATT, in reply to Mr. McCullough's question, why did not god do this, that, and the other? said, god was placed in the position of the old man and his ass—admitted as much nonsense on the side of the deist as on that of the atheist—said that those who asserted the infinity of matter, must hold themselves ready to put the world into a glass bottle—also assured his audience that a vacuum is formed in a tube of mercury.

Mr. DUNN appealed to the common sense of his audience, asking, does god exist, or do they themselves exist? that is the question. Nothing had been said to prove a creative power—suppose a vacuum, according to Mr. Pratt, is *that* god? Mr. D. could not see

how the negative of something, which is nothing, should combine with other nothing to produce a something.

The chairman observed, that the question as originally opened had been wandered from—instead of confining themselves to the common notions of a god, they had almost wholly talked of a philosophic god—that is not the question.

Mr. PUDDEFORD said, he had heard of the spirit of nature—now this was as absurd as no god at all. All men possess little or more of the spirit of nature, but the spirit of nature has left us no record of its part in the formation of living things. That god is infinite is presumed from the comparative infinity of our own minds.

Mr. HOLYOAKE said he had not risen to reply to Mr. Puddeford, that gentleman was a sufficient reply to himself. Though the atheists formed a party in this discussion, he trusted that they were without party feelings. The principles of atheism should belong to all parties. His ingenious friend Mr. Ellis had invented a *general* question in the debate, he (Mr. H.) had no objection to this—it proved that theism was abandoned by its own champions as indefensible. It was something for theists to invest deity with the greatness of personality, the glory of intelligence, and the splendour of infinite attributes, but Mr. Lloyd Jones's god was an unintelligent principle—ragged, barren, bald, and bare. Analogy proved that intelligence belongs only to personality, and, as Mr. L. Jones denied a person, his deity was an unintelligent principle. The debate properly related to the existence of gods in general—not to the god of the bible alone. Surely Mr. J. never promised to defend the god of the bible. Mr. J. had said he could not be reconciled to the world without a deity. But Mr. J. consented that his deity was electricity—were they then to understand that it was electricity that gilded nature and reconciled Mr. Jones to the parson and the magot? The Mexicans, the Mohicans, and the Mingoes had been swept from the world by a horrid christian rapacity—before our own eyes vice rankly flourished, and honest merit was trampled down—what consolation was it to be told there existed either a power or principle who *could* avert these evils and yet does not do it? The atheist's was a nobler belief.

Mr. Lloyd Jones came forward, but the audience preferred to hear a Mr. GWYNN, a comparative stranger, who, however, disappointed them, occupying his time by impressing upon his audience the fact that both Mr. Hetherington and Mr. Jones had admitted the existence of a power capable of producing all things, and had also confessed it mysterious, thereby placing them-

selves in such a position as to disqualify them from judging of his (Mr. G.'s) belief in the god of the bible, whether right or wrong. Mr. G. promised to give us some information about god at a future time.

Mr. LLOYD JONES would not hold himself to be consistent through life for any man or set of men, but would endeavour to act consistently with truth and honesty—had not spoken of god as a matter of opinion, but of feeling, and therefore stood alone—was not in the habit of looking to a crowd to give him sanction for his opinions, nor look for applause from any audience or pack of men—it had been said there were but two sides to this question, why there were a dozen sides, and, besides the unbeliever on the one hand, and the personifier on the other, there were doubtless many in the meeting who took the same view of the question as himself—some scenes in nature he felt delighted with, and this feeling he called god—and the involuntary yielding to this overpowering feeling he called worship—objected to the notion of future punishment, but not to the imagination of future rewards—recommended atheists not to meddle with that religious feeling which was better than anything they had put forward, observing, that, as a party, they would go far to destroy man's capability of enjoying the delightful feelings of our nature. He would unite with all in the attainment of a palpable physical good, but not with them in matters of feeling or opinion—and all who interfered with these would be tyrannical or illiberal if they had the power, whether members of a christian, or of an anti-persecution society.

Mr. HOLYOAKE moved another question, name y, "Is the belief in a deity of any kind morally beneficial?" Carried by a large majority. C. D.

THE LAW OF JESUS.

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.—*Jesus Christ*. Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you. The golden rule of all honest men.—*Diagoras Atheos, Oracle of Reason, No. 88.*

THESE words are susceptible of a variety of meanings, when applied to practice. You are commanded to do as you would be done unto, that is, your feelings and volitions are to be the standard of the feelings and volitions of all other people. A Bruce says, thinking religiously. I would wish to be dealt with by the public as I am going to treat Paterson, if I were guilty of similar blasphemies. Judging from his own idiosyncrasy, the creature only of the circumstances that surround him, how possibly can he be a judge, and throw himself into the situation and organisation of another?

Jardine construes the rule the same, and inclined to do the same thing as a Bruce or

Green, his feelings naturally carry him to put himself in their place. He acts, accordingly, in violation of all justice, denies redress to the injured, and acquits the offenders against the laws—but he does as he would be done unto, as far as himself and his friends at the bar are concerned. I believe by far the largest class of people act upon this interpretation of the new commandment, and are impervious to all other rules of conduct or modes of reasoning. Some there are, that carry out this view of the saying to a much greater degree of extravagance. They have not to act upon it, therefore it may be only what is called the affectation of fine sentiment. They place themselves in the situation of all the villains—they adopt their case as their own—they have a friendly feeling for tyrants, murderers, and robbers—and cannot sympathise with the victims. They address the latter, and say, “Do as you would be done unto if you were in the situation of the former—they are not to be hurt in their persons or feelings, but to be pitied.” They have such an amiable weakness, they cannot find it in their heart, they say, to hate the instruments of any wickedness, so much as to pity them for their mental blindness, induced by the prejudices to which unavoidable circumstances have given birth. The greater the instance of bigotry and tyranny, the more do these kind hearts overflow with generous pity, and are stirred up with frantic emotion. They go about like Billy Lackadays, with a handkerchief to their eyes, weeping over these objects of their affection, and if their loves are in danger, they can hold no longer, they cry out—save him, save him! Thus, when some one had the indiscretion to recommend that very serious notice should be taken of the exploits of a Bruce, the natural consequences which Black, of the *Chronicle*, thought must have ensued, if there had been at the time a man in the shop—a deist immediately confesses to the soft impeachment, that the criminal in danger is the hero of his adoration, and his fears overpowering his reason, he imagines his dead body already stretched across the threshold, and, like another Achilles, takes to his arms afresh, and rushes to the field to protect the corpse of his Patroclus. The fate mentioned which attended parsons forced upon Scotland, and the extinction of those christian pharisees in Ireland proclaimed as a greater obligation on humanity, who, not content with devouring widows’ houses, massacred them and their fatherless babes—than the land’s length is filled with lamentations, and like Rachels weeping for their children, that would not be comforted, the apprehensions of many for the safety of the protestant clergy cannot be pacified. As if they suspected what was once written in the pro-

phetic pages of the *Oracle* must prove true and their pretty innocents must be sacrificed. The spirit of these gentle souls was much troubled at the shock which the prejudices of the faithful received from the proceedings last year, in Holywell-street. Of course it was do as you would be done unto, your liberty was displeasing to the religious, you would not like it if you were they, you must therefore consult their feelings, and make a sacrifice of your natural rights, and the object you are endeavouring to obtain, freedom of expression. When these remonstrances did not succeed, and Paterson would not wait for the improvement of public opinion and atheism made easy in practice, then these champions of the christians grew quite furious, and the deists, infidels, and progressive atheists swore it was regular persecution—Paterson and his supporters were all bigots, and if they came into power, a reign of blood and terror would succeed, unparalleled in the annals of superstition. No doubt many more than said it, felt greatly relieved when Paterson was committed to the keeping of the tender mercies of those, whose unhappy lot, in being so long prevented wreaking their vengeance on Paterson, had excited the deep commiseration of these philosophers and philanthropists. The proceedings in Edinburgh, before old wounds were allowed to heal over, must touch up the raw of these Lazaruses terribly. Parliament is over, and the Paterson session begins—there is no more talk, and there is the devil to do—St. Stephen is silent, but St. Andrew will be walking out of his grave all the recess. There was the intrusion and non-intrusion question settled, and trumpeted forth in the queen’s speech, the affair seemed to have ended to the heart’s content of socialists and philosophers, two sets of preachers paid instead of one to fire away blank cartridge at each other, when lo and behold, there was Paterson with his “I hope I dont intrude,” setting up shop in the northern capital, and single-handed and ill-provided with ammunition, dealing in no child’s play, or thimble-riggery, to raise the wind. The infant atheists, “mewling and piking in the nurse’s arms,” are not shocked. No, the sensations of young England are of too refined a nature, but they are truly grieved that Paterson and Co. should resent the prosecution of Robinson and Finlay, and carry the war of infidelity into the most bible-reading, religious country in the world. According to them, how can Paterson attack his enemies, when he should wish them well, congratulate the parsons on the increase of their numbers, and hope their flocks may be brimfull of superstition? The golden rule of all honest men, “Do as you would be done unto,” is quite clear on the occasion, and there is no need making a new one.

Paterson has only to put it to himself, how he can shock the prejudices of those whose places and characters he would undoubtedly occupy at this moment, had he been subjected to the control of the same circumstances, and the answer will be that he will pack up his goods, be off, and leave his bail to take the consequences. It is really distressing to see how they compassionate those who, having received a blow on one cheek, are disposed not quietly to put up with another, but to pay their creditors with interest. One would think, from their anxiety, the fatal consequences might happen to them which were apprehended from persons allowed to attack the property and life of others. Instead of saying

Lay on Macduff;

And damned be he that first cries hold, enough!

they rush between the combatants, and explore him who has received the first blow, and can make out the case of the greatest injuries, to do the deed which was intended for himself, and heroically fall on his own sword, rather than let his enemy die. If Paterson had been in Edinburgh last century, when blasphemy might be punished with death, according to the new rules of morality, he should have erected a gallows before his house, and some fine morning shown himself hanging to the delighted people of Edinburgh. They would have Paterson bless them that curse him, and pray for them that despitely use him. No doubt all the saints, when they say, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," are aiming at the same results, and only doing as they would be done unto, when, with the blessing of god, they make short work of Paterson. He must already have the moral dignity of his character severely tried, when having lost several pounds worth of stock, it would be considered pick-pocketing and shoplifting, if he were to take it back again—and had he the meanness, the cowardice, and the dishonesty, deliberately to execute a rescue, he would be avoided as a hissing viper, or any other obnoxious reptile. Paterson has not only the golden rules of Jesus, and other mixed metal ones to guide him, but the example of the great christian lawgiver, and his holy army of martyrs, to point the moral, and to second the advice of some of his atheistical friends. Jesus finding that people would not do to him as he would be done unto—made a great man of—he wheeled about and turned about, and did to himself what he would do to others, had himself hanged, and gave that commandment to his followers, until they could kill, and, in their turn, do as they would be done unto. Thus does the maxim suit itself to all situations. These semi-christian atheists think the greater right of society is to bring to the rope and gallows

those who attempt to carry out their favourite principle, "resist evil." I doubt whether they would be gratified even in the present state of various self-imposed tyrannies moral and physical. It has always been laid down by the law that a person has a right to defend his house and property, even if it end in the death of the aggressors, and with all the passive obedience of the atheists in favour of the utmost illegal severity, I doubt whether the christian judges of the land would agree to have considered as murder, and punished as such, the undisputed privilege of an Englishman. It appears to me, if Paterson entertained the ferocious views of an atheist who quotes scripture, and "Asserts the greater right of society to bring to the rope and to the gallows those who merely *attempt* to resist evil," Paterson would, according to this reading of "do as you would be done unto," be justified in coolly and deliberately running through the body the person of him who should intend to break his bones and take his property. He would be only doing to another, according to the prescription and practice, as he would wish to be done unto under like circumstances. W.J.B.

NOTICE.

J. Merrin's Song is too long for the *Oracle*.

H. Greensides recommends the formation of an Atheistic Union. He is thanked for his hints which will, if possible, be acted on. His good-natured acrostic is not exactly suitable. The Secretary of the Anti-Persecution Union will write to him.

M. R., Manchester—His "Greatest Slave" has considerable merit, but does not "fit" us.

E.M., Manchester—His "Pills for the Pious" are of such dimensions that the holy gullet must be greatly distended in swallowing them. The insertion of them is declined, because we who war with the idea of the existence of god care not to reason against the attributes of such being. It is true that it is a vulgar notion, that "all things are possible with god," or any being. But when people have credulity enough to believe in the existence of a deity, all other nonsense follows as a matter of course. Destroy the root and the branches will wither.

R. F., Northampton sends some waggish lines on the Jew-book declaration that "Some men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." R. F. alludes to the famous *posterior* evidence of god's existence which Moses obtained, and says:

"If men love darkness more than light
Because their deeds are evil;
Then is not god who shuns the light
A child too of the devil?"

The other verses are too prolix for insertion.

Paul the Apostle of Atheism, Wigan—The same objection applies to his communication as that made to "Pills for the Pious." Declined:

Chas. Dent's Providence accepted.

The "Vine, Wine, and Cup," declined. Surely the writer does not wish us to break our pledge.

RECEIVED.—A New Christmas Carol, by A. R. How should we Act? by Charles John Savage. M. E.'s Lines about the Man *wot* stole the Niddy. A Young Man who has been a supporter of the *Oracle* from its commencement. The Wild and Wicked Youth, by A.C. And W.M.D. Bath—who will greatly oblige the editor by sending him Mr. L's address.

ERRATUM.—In the first line of Mr. H.'s reply, on page 345, read *now* for "not."

HYMNS FOR THE MILLION—No. 4.

PARODY ON JOHN ANDERSON
MY JO.

Air, "John Anderson my Jo."

My bonnie Meg, my jo Meg,
When we gang up to heaven,
We'll sit upon Jehovah's knee
From morning until even;
And we'll fight and flite, like angels bright,
Although auld god say no,
And we'll quarrel through eternity,
My bonnie Meg, my jo.

My bonnie Meg, my jo Meg,
When night begins to fa',
And god all tired's gone to sleep,
In heaven's great big ha',
We'll scamper aff to hell's wide gates
And make the deil a bow,
And we'll ask admission for ae night,
My bonnie Meg, my jo.

My bonnie Meg, my jo Meg,
When this great god's asleep,
And all his power and mightiness
No more than a dead sheep,
Good deil, we'll say, now is your time,
To heaven you should go,
And bring his godship down to hell,
My bonnie Meg, my jo.

My bonnie Meg, my jo Meg,
When god in hell is laid
And he has felt the fiendish pangs
He for poor souls has made,
He'll rue he made the lake of fire,
To burn himself in, so
He'll turn it into paradise,
My bonnie Meg, my jo.

Glasgow, Oct., 1843.

SUBSCRIPTIONS.

For the London Anti-Persecution Union.

Mr. Gullett	£0	1	0
Mr. Palmer	0	1	0
Beelzebub, Hoxton	0	1	0
Mr. Gibbs, per W. J.	0	1	0
Per Mr. McCullough, collector No. 20	0	1	1

G. J. H., Sec. A.P.U.

Subscriptions for the Anti-Persecution Union are received by Mr. Geo. Smith, 5, Greengate, Salford. As the Scottish Trials are approaching, it is hoped that the Collectors of the Anti-Persecution Union will spare no exertions in collecting funds, and that they will make their remittances by the end of October.

G. J. H.

ERRATUM.—For "Dumbartonshire," p. 349, read Stirlingshire, in "Atheistical Ramblings."

A Shop for the sale of all kinds of Blasphemy has been opened at No. 2, TOWER-LANE, Second Door from John Street, BRISTOL. Back Nos. of the *Oracle* may be obtained by ordering.

Nos. 1 and 8 are now in print, and may be obtained by ordering.

LONDON.—Atheism excites a fair share of attention here. The discussion at John-street is going on and doing good. Mr. Lloyd Jones has made his debut as a goddhist, and if he has contributed little to our edification, he has added greatly to our amusement. The Whitechapel branch, which twelve months ago was so singularly squeamish, has lately concluded a long and spirited discussion on the god question, in which Messrs. Power, Mind, Intelligence, and Co. stood at a prominent discount. I am delivering a course of lectures at the City Road Hall, on atheism, which are well attended. The plain, blunt manner in which they were announced by placards as "Lectures on Atheism," excited a little surprise, and brought out a Dr. Betherheim, who put up his name and address as "challenger," in the chivalrous manner of the schools, at the entrance to the hall. But I am afraid the doctor will not "show fight." The Discussion Class at the Rotunda have posted up as a question, "The Comparative Merits of Atheism and Deism." Three-fourths of all the questions proposed there have been of a theological character. On Saturday evening, passing by a coffee-room in one of our institutions, in which a harmonic meeting was assembled, my attention was arrested by the president's voice singing, "Poor Jesus Christ," one of our new "Hymns for the million." I cannot help saying here, that I hope Mr. Mainzer, nor Mr. Hullah will overlook our endeavours to provide popular songs for the use of their singing classes. I will let you know as soon as they are introduced in Exeter Hall. Mr. Bendall, the excellent and liberal proprietor of the City Road Institute, informs me that he "Intends dedicating his hall to the *known* god, as soon as such god is found out, for he is of opinion that the credit of the unknown is diminishing every day." This sentence expresses *that* regarding atheism in London, which it is the object of this brief report to convey.

G. J. H.

Just Published—Price Fourpence.

THE QUESTIONS OF ZAPATA; a Spanish Friar, and Professor of Theology in the University of Salamanca. Presented to the Junta of Doctors, 1629. The questions were suppressed, and the author consigned to the stake, at Valladolid, in 1631. Abounding with Extraordinary Illustrations of the word of god. London: Hetherington, 40, Holywell-street, Strand.

LIBRARY OF REASON.

Penny Numbers.

NEXT WEEK.

THE FALLEN STAR; or THE HISTORY OF A FALSE RELIGION.

By Sir E. L. Bulwer.

Printed and Published by WILLIAM CHILTON, No. 40 Holywell-street, Strand, London. Saturday, Oct. 21, 1843.

THE
ORACLE OF REASON:
Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

“FAITH’S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE.”

First Editor—Charles Southwell, imprisoned for twelve months and fined £100, for Blasphemy in No. 4.
Second Editor—George Jacob Holyoake, imprisoned for six months, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.
Third Editor—Thomas Paterson, imprisoned for one month, for Blasphemous Placards, in London.
Vendors—George Adams, imprisoned for one month for selling No. 25, in Cheltenham; and
Harriet Adams, his wife, arrested for selling No. 4, in the same town.

No. 98.] EDITED BY WILLIAM CHILTON.

[PRICE 1D.]

REPORT OF PUBLIC MEETING

*Of the Anti-Persecution Union, Rotunda,
London, 17th Oct., 1843.*

MR. SKELTON, chairman, felt it a honour to preside on that occasion. It was the proper business of working men to step forward and protect the free expression of opinion. It was of more importance to them than to any other class. Besides, the defence of the right to publish heterodoxy was a radical right, and only the working men were ever found to defend such useful privileges. The union had conducted all their public meetings in a spirit of independence. They sought not and cared not for titled chairmen. Their principles had never been compromised by wealth, and he hoped they never would. The objects of the union were excellent, and he would support it to the extent of his power, and call on others to do the same.

MR. HOLYOAKE.—Religion was said to be a momentous question, it ought then to be an open question. Where men were made accountable they ought to be free. The plague-spot of persecution had now appeared in the person of the Rev. Mr. Lee, of Campsie. Mr. McNeile was taken, his wife left in want. At Cheltenham they apprehended Mrs. Adams, her husband and child, and left her family destitute. Zeal for god spared neither age nor sex. Christianity was a dangerous moral nuisance which public opinion ought to put down. Robt. Hall had said infidelity was ferocious—but let Robert Hall look at home. The resolution he moved condemned all legal interference with opinion. Persons might argue, censure, and execrate, but not imprison or fine. That most ferocious of all journals, the *Times*, might say what it pleased about him—and on one occasion it had said some *complimentary* things—if it would but allow a fair chance of reply. Some persons had said that Mr. Paterson and others had *provoked* prosecution, but such persons ought to blush for their own degradation. To provoke was to outrage—and was it to be considered an outrage to speak out honestly? He (Mr. H.) would peril his resolution rather than

disguise it. It asked a licence for the blasphemer. The free expression of all opinions was too broad a question for a young person to speak of positively, but theological opinions he did understand, he had had great experience with them, and was prepared to prove that they ought to be left entirely free. No body but the Anti-Persecution Union defended this principle. The socialist branches, as branches, declared they could do nothing in the matter. The province of the union was distinct and noble—they would stand by it as became men, and he hoped that the public would support them as became lovers of liberty. He moved, “That this meeting regards as a gross injustice, legal interference of any kind, with the expression of theological opinions.”

MR. SAVAGE, jun. seconded the resolution. It was a gross injustice to prevent the free expression of opinions. The man who does not protest against persecution, is himself a persecutor. Galileo said one thing on astronomy and Moses another—and as Moses always speaks the truth, Galileo must be a liar—so Galileo was imprisoned. All men should denounce legal interference with opinion, because force only made men hypocrites.

MR. McCULLOUGH said, he liked the resolution in his hand, because of its latitude and liberality. It embraced the defence of both christian and atheist, when their common liberty was endangered. These persecutions were shaking religion to its foundation—and so they ought. He honoured the Scottish victims. They comprised men who would stand by liberty in all danger. The public ought, and he hoped they would, support them as they deserved. He moved, “That Messrs. Finlay, Robinson, Paterson, and McNeile, of Scotland, and Dr. Kalley, of Madeira, are deserving of the active support of this meeting.”

MR. HOLYOAKE said, that in the absence of Mr. Alexander Campbell, who had been unexpectedly prevented from attending to second that resolution, he would do it. He wished to say, he knew Mr. Paterson entered on his work in the true spirit of a reformer. He did what he felt to be right, and he knew to be useful, and he asked no man’s sympathy.

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thy, and would accept no man's *charity*. Mr. H. believed he might say the same of the others. Hence it was, that the union made no appeal to the *cold*. If any friends of honest heterodoxy were disposed to help, they were proud of their assistance—and if not, they were quite content to struggle alone. They scorned charity—liberty only appealed to justice.

Mr. SAVAGE, sen. said, that the resolution he moved assumed that christianity was already contemptible, and if not, it was time it was so considered. Religion destroys the intellect, and then men become slaves. He observed some persons departing. It reminded him of a parson who once said he thought his hearers did not want to be saved—for when they had heard him but half an hour, they grew fidgetty—and he concluded that if they could not stop in the way of heaven half an hour, they would not like to be there through all eternity. He (Mr. S.) hoped better things of his hearers. His opinion was, that humanity triumphed over the baseness of religion, in the few who were not persecutors. Dr. Watts had well described the effects of christianity :

Lift up my banners saith, the lord,
Where antichrist hath stood ;
The city of my gospel foes,
Shall be a field of blood.

And they must remember that christians called everything “antichrist,” of which they disapproved. He moved, “That the present persecutions of atheists, are disgraceful to the law, and the parties promoting them, and only calculated to bring christianity into further contempt.”

In the absence of J. C. Blumenfield, occasioned by a professional engagement—a gentleman in the meeting seconded the resolution, which was carried unanimously, as were the others.

After a vote of thanks to the chairman, the meeting separated.

THE SCOTCH GOD WAR.

PROSECUTION OF McNEIL!

ATHEISTICAL RAMBLINGS.

III.

THUS ended one of the most successful attacks upon superstition that the Scotch people have been subjected to; and we do not arrogate to ourselves, neither do we predicate more than will be allowed by every thinking mind, when we affirm, that a few such noble, and, I shall call them, virtuous movements, will secure to the men and women of Scotland the right—and it is the only right *worth* struggling for—freely to express their thoughts *whatever those thoughts may be*. That right once established in the

land o' cakes, the roast beef of “Old England” would, ere long, tickle the palate of a nation that could rise from the banquet and pride itself on being *free*, in the most emphatic sense of the term!

Atheists of Great Britain! Are you desirous of possessing the liberty freely to express what you think? *I answer in the affirmative!* Are you prepared then to support those who are ready, and eager, to lay down their lives in procuring that right? Do not answer this until I inform you that there are men in Scotland who *will* do this—and *I am one of them*; but do not mistake me, when I crave your support. I do not mean that *support* which falls under the *sympathetic* category—such as public meetings, the moving, seconding, speaking to, and carrying of empty resolutions, which resemble the toothless canine, whose “bark is worse than his bite.” Oh no! when I use the word *support*, it is emblematical of pounds! shillings!! and pence!!! Do we thoroughly understand each other now? I presume so. If not, excuse me for grappling more closely with the matter. You are desirous of having FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION; to obtain FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, *men* and *money* are requisite; I can furnish the *men*—will you furnish the *money*? This brings the matter to a point. To say more would be to write *gammon*.

Mr. Editor, I have not yet concluded the narrative of events in our tour to the west.

After closing the “stall” we returned to our “inn,” where a number of the villagers were assembled who, in the morning, would have been the first to prepare a faggot for our extermination. It was really pleasant to observe the modification of feeling that a day's reflection had produced. Instead of the fanatical tumult that met us in the early part of the day, we were welcomed with smiles; and, “tell it not in Gath,” before parting for the night, infidels and christians—“honest men and bonnie lasses”—were “tripping on the light, fantastic toe,” and mingling with each other in the “mazy dance” on the clean stone floor of the kitchen inn! Aye; e'en mine hostess went through the evolutions of a Scotch reel, with nimble step, and heart as light as her pretty daughter. Yes! the few short hours spent in the kitchen inn at Campsie have left impressions that bid defiance to time! But, Mr. Editor, let us not become sentimental on your hands. To return to business.

The innocent hilarity of the evening was succeeded on the morn by preparations for the liberation of McNeil from Stirling gaol. Stirling lies at the distance of 22 miles from Campsie, and after breakfast we started on that journey. In three hours we were in the sheriff clerk's office at Stirling, where I pre-

pared a petition to the sheriff of the county, craving that McNeil might be admitted to bail. Next morning the procurator-fiscal granted a warrant for Mr. McNeil's liberation, on bail being found for his appearance to the extent of £30. I immediately volunteered to become bail, which was accepted of, on my agreeing to procure the certificate of a justice of the peace that my name was "good and sufficient caution" to that extent. This I did on my arrival in Edinburgh on Saturday last; on the evening of that day I transmitted to the sheriff clerk depute of Stirling the bond of caution with the J.P.'s certificate, and received the following in answer thereto by this evening's post: "Stirling, Oct. 9th, 1843.

"Sir.—I am this morning in receipt of yours of the 7th instant, enclosing bond of caution for the appearance of John McNeil; and have sent to the gaoler a certificate of caution having been found in order to McNeil's liberation. I am, &c.

"WM. GRANT."

From this letter we may infer that McNeil is now at liberty.

WM. BUDGE.

To the Editor of the Oracle of Reason.

SIR.—The columns of the *Oracle* have informed its readers of the rambles of Messrs. Budge, Jeffery, and myself in the west of Scotland, the principal object of which was the release of the victim of priestly care in Stirling gaol, John McNeil, which was accomplished at no little trouble, expense, and risk to ourselves—not from bigots—for whom we were well prepared—but from the cant of pseudo-liberals who are busy among ourselves.

My visit to Edinburgh has been advantageous in more respects than one; here I have met with the boldest advocates of freedom, along with the veriest poltroons professing atheism. Your remarks on the Newcastle anti-superstitionists are as applicable *here as there*. In fact, Edinburgh may be called a "School for Scandal," for it is a leading feature of so-called liberalism in this city to pick up little faults, if there are any, or manufacture them, if there are none, in all who take a prominent part in the mental struggle now going forward; so that I was not at all surprised, on our return, to find our journey termed a "wild goose chase," by the gosslings who may be said to be the *cause* of the Scotch agitation, and to hear the humane and liberal expression, from one of the Edinburgh victims, in reference to the Campsie prosecution, "Let them fight their own battles!!!" I was not surprised, I say, to find that I had become the object of their remarks, and was gravely told "I had forfeited the confidence of the *friends*, as it was clear I wanted to get into gaol," meaning, should I get into trouble with authority, bail was not to be expected. Was ever such contemptible conduct heard of? Matched only in Newcastle. Because I, along with two unflinching votaries of liberty, indignantly took up arms in defence of a young man already rotting in gaol, side by side with thieves and murderers—because we set at defiance the antiquated rules, and kicked aside the infantile prejudices, of the insane mob and the bigotted priesthood—because we ventured to stride beyond the temporising and lickspittle policy, which has for the last few years afforded, to those who wished it, an opportunity of pointing the finger of scorn at the rational society, and which will ultimately split that body into sects innumerable—because we were *bold* enough, and *honest* enough to *think* and *act* for our-

selves, we were taunted—at least, I was taunted—by those who certainly possess more money than brains, but who, unfortunately, do not seem to know the use of either—with having "lost the confidence of the friends!" Really, Mr. Editor, such melancholy twaddle disposes me to utter the hackneyed cry of "save me from my friends!"

It is certainly matter of deep regret that the cause of atheism should be clogged in its movements by a set of men who have enrolled themselves under its banner, not through a clear conception of its sublime principles—for they never apparently possessed the slightest perception of any principle—but, as it would seem, from a vain desire to become identified with truth far above their limited comprehension:

"Their tongues are false, their friendship all a cheat,
Their smiles hypocrisy, their words deceit."

I now come to ask *what is to be done?* It is a question of life or death; and I put it as if standing before the inquisitors of Spain, with an *auto da fe* on the one hand, and recantation on the other. I feel as if on the verge of losing all that I live for; and I *do* live for atheism!—not that the cause of atheism has been, or is ever likely to be, a source of emolument to me—emolument I value not, and my conduct has established this. No, the world knows, or ought to know, that I seek not personal aggrandisement—that I fight not with the priest to wrest from him the paltry stipend—the glebe and the "communion elements"—that I war not with the "powers that be" to ensconce myself into office, "lucrative without employment"—that I do not attack one superstition, merely to make room for another! god help the brains of those who think so! My object is to clear the way for the firm establishment of truth; to uproot oppression and error, wherever they may present themselves—whether under sacerdotal robes, or under wig and gown of legal thief—whether in the hall of justice or the house of God! But if I am to be thwarted at every step by men who have attached themselves to the cause under the specious mask of "friendship"—men, who, having scraped together a few pounds, make money the chief object of life, and clandestinely express dislike to every *body* and every *thing* which seems to threaten the security of their already-acquired property, or to retard their accumulation of more—men whose *friendship* is more detrimental than open *hostility*; if this continue, I say let us at once dissolve the connection. Yes! Goldsmith is correct:

"And what is friendship but a name,

A charm that lulls to sleep,

A shade that follows wealth or fame,

But leaves the wretch to weep?"

Let those pseudo-friends of the cause, then, follow the rich and the famous, and leave me to "weep" by myself; or let them examine, and weigh well, the motives that actuate men who live but to reform the abuses of society, and all will yet be well.

T. PATERSON.

TRANSUBSTANTIATION.—There is a church dedicated to St. Martin, at Worms, at the entrance of which is a representation of god the father, like an old man, at the top of one corner, from whence he seems to address himself to the virgin Mary, who is on her knees in the middle of the picture, holding the infant Jesus by the feet, and putting his head into the hopper of a mill, which is turned by the twelve apostles. Hard by the pope is painted upon his knees, receiving the host of wafers, which fall ready-made from the mill, into a golden chalice; one of which the pope presents to a cardinal, who gives it to a bishop, the bishop to a priest, and the priest to a layman.—*Mission*, 1740.

THE PHILALETHEAN SOCIETY.

I HAVE received from the vice-president of the Philalethean Society the following :

So long ago as the 25th of January last, I transmitted to the conductors of the *Oracle of Reason* a copy of a work by Mr. Gillespie, of our society, entitled, "An Argument *a priori* for the Being and Attributes of God," and challenged any one connected with the *Oracle of Reason* to answer that argument. The challenge was printed and accepted in the *Oracle of Reason*, No. 61, and I also received a letter to the same effect, in which permission was requested to print Mr. Gillespie's argument in the *Oracle* in parallel columns with the intended answer. This permission was immediately granted, upon condition, that if Mr. Gillespie thought it necessary to reply to any part of the answer to his argument, the reply should also be inserted in the *Oracle*.

As Mr. Gillespie was publishing a new edition of his argument, I suggested that the answer might be delayed until a copy of the new edition should be forwarded to the *Oracle*. This was done, in two parts, the first part being sent about a month or so after the acceptance of the challenge, and the second part about three months ago. Upon transmitting the last part I requested that its receipt might be acknowledged—and it accordingly was so in the *Oracle*.

Since then the Philalethean Society have been expecting that the promised answer would at least be commenced in the pages of the *Oracle*—and the question formerly transmitted to you, and which I now beg to repeat, is—whether and when the conductors of the *Oracle* still intend to attempt to answer Mr. Gillespie's work?

I may further mention, that in event of your failing shortly to proceed with the promised answer, it is the intention of the Philalethean Society to publish their challenge to the *Oracle*—that that challenge was accepted by the *Oracle*, and a pledge given that an answer would be forthcoming—and that the *Oracle* has failed to redeem that pledge—leaving the public to form their own opinion upon these facts.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

CHARLES CLARK,
Vice Presidt. Phil. Sociey.

The statements made in Mr. Clark's letter are, I believe, correct, but, as far as I am concerned, I may say that Mr. Gillespie's work has never been seen by me, the copy sent having been received by M.Q.R., who expressed his willingness to undertake a refutation, if Mr. Southwell or Mr. Holyoake did not "Claim their acknowledged priority of title to the picking up of the theological gauntlet."

In reply to Mr. Clark—if either Mr. Southwell, Mr. Holyoake, or M.Q.R. think fit to engage in discussion with Mr. Gillespie, the pages of the *Oracle* are at the service of the disputants. If I were not utterly ignorant of the contents of Mr. G.'s work, my engagements would not allow me to enter the lists.

For the threat to publish the challenge of the Philalethean Society, etc., those connected with the *Oracle* will care but little—those who *know* them will readily believe that it is anything but *fear* of Mr. Gillespie's arguments which has caused the delay in replying to him. From my own knowledge I can venture to say that duties of far greater importance have occupied the attention of

M.Q.R., C.S., and G.J.H., since the time when the challenge and reply appeared. Those gentlemen can now answer for themselves.

THE EDITOR.

DISCUSSION ON THE QUESTION
"IS BELIEF IN A DEITY OF
ANY KIND MORALLY BENE-
FICIAL."

THE President, Mr. CLARKE, having read, from the *Oracle*, the report of the last evening's debate, called upon Mr. Holyoake to open the new question as above.

MR. HOLYOAKE.—Public discussions have this advantage, that in their arena the trifles pertaining to any question are dispelled, and the important points are rescued from the oblivion of the closet, pressed on the attention, and commended to the practice of mankind. And from the willingness with which their president facilitated the proposal of their present question, on last Friday night, he had doubtless promoted the interests of truth. The previous debate had been called "dry," but such remark discovered a narrow view, nothing was dry that was useful. A hundred experiences corroborate the great truth, that whatever is wrong in the abstract, is in the end practically mischievous—so it would prove with the belief in deities. The socialists debates on free will were termed "dry" by some, but they produced good, and so would their past discussions. Mr. Lloyd Jones had proved himself superior to an affirmative speaker on theism. He did not differ from him (Mr. H) except in calling nature by the "name of god, which had fenced all crime with holiness," and in styling the elevated feeling which nature produced, by the polluted name of religion. A practice about as proper, at it would be in them to call a republican a tory, or a roman catholic a unitarian. Atheism was in all respects the opposite of theism, and his plan would be to display the moral influences of atheism, and if he succeeded, the pernicious tendencies of theism would follow as a matter of course. It was idle to call atheism a mere negation—if it was, then was theism but a *mere affirmation*. But all knew that theism was of potent influence, and so was atheism. The atheist believed the eternity of matter—this invested the world with new charms, and bound him to it with thrilling ties. Nature was the source of his pleasures, and the theatre of his actions—he rose on her lap, was nurtured in her arms, and expected at last to repose in the eternal stillness of her bosom. The atheists views were not "gloomy." When the forest trees stretched their huge arms to the gale, and looked like "grandeur dreaming"—they were not less glorious because there was no metaphysical abstrac-

tion behind them. The violet was not less fragrant, nor the lily less beautiful, because no dry unintelligent principle created them. They were in themselves delightful—they were gems in matter's eternal crown—emanations of the ever-varying beauty of self-existent nature. Even the "decayed parsnip" manifested a marvellous operation—and in the "maggot," from which Mr. Jones started with gloomy forebodings, the atheist beheld vitality and beauty springing up—phœnix-like—even from the ashes of corruption. Believing nothing of the gods, no principle of faith vitiates the atheist's reasonings. He relies on experience, and dim chimeras perplex him not. He talks of truth as truth, and such terms as "divine providence," and "divine truths" he regards as the clap-traps of piety and delusion. His dependance is on himself, and his own well-understood powers. With the "will of god" he is not bewildered—but is guided by utilities, and determined by facts. Theism is the stronghold of delusion, and it is the glory of atheism to strike down delusion. Men who scorn deception on other points, *contend* for it here. Of religion even Burns repeats:

If a lie, what truth so precious as that lie.

Religion stood alone in its laudation of lies. Theism taught to look to future states—and hence tyranny sat on his haughty throne in security, the slave kissed his fetters in the pernicious hope of future rectification. If tyranny is to be punished, it should be punished here. The very expectation of future bliss was pernicious—it unbound human interests. When the atheist saw a fellow-being struck down, his days, or his enjoyments diminished—he felt that such man was injured for ever, and wronged without redress. This doubly nerved him for the work of reform. Hence the atheist pursued tyranny with an unrelenting hate, and clung to truth because it ennobled him, and to justice because it was the only basis of happiness. The gentleman who concluded the debate last evening would call atheism the "sour advocacy of negatives," but he (Mr. H.) would tell him it was the ardent advocacy of positive and beneficial principles. It was the interest of the atheist to be practical, because he had a double interest in being useful—therefore he detested the puerilities of spiritualism. Emerson fluently says, that a man leaves the busy hum of the city, and in the calm of the woods he finds himself—so with the atheist, he leaves the mazy precincts of theism, and in the calm of atheism he finds his manhood. Time did not permit to descant on the unfitness of Christ, and other gods, as models for mankind—he would only add that atheism did

leave imagination unfettered—for that which surprised us in Homer, instructed us in Shakspeare, or thrilled us in Byron—were but the deep impress of nature's realities, and in those realities the atheist found his home. (Mr. H. concluded a well-spent half hour, amidst very general applause.)

Mr. PUDDERFORD thought, that if the maggot and rotting vegetable matter be the highest object of an atheist's contemplation, his ideas were grovelling indeed—the christian had imaginings of a more elevating character to dwell upon. He hoped, after this life, to see Jesus with the scars of his wounds received upon earth, to live with him in mansions of eternal bliss in the city of the new Jerusalem, as described in the scripture, being 1500 miles square, and high as it is broad, with walls of pure gold, and a stream of crystal running through it. He could not conceive of the annihilation of a human mind, after a short existence of threescore and ten years, but believed it coeval with the mighty mind which gave it birth.

Mr. EDWARDS remarked, that it had been said there had never been a commonwealth of atheists, no, but there had been commonwealths of all kinds of believers, and the consequences were of a most pernicious character—the belief in a deity is pregnant with political, social, and domestic misery. Is a well-formed child seen, it is a beautiful work of god—if one crippled and distorted, what a visitation of god—thus throwing upon the shoulders of a god the consequences of their own folly or neglect. Man delights to revel in the beautiful productions of nature or art, without troubling himself about their author. In reading a beautiful poem, or surveying a work of art, in sculpture or painting, who thinks or cares about the author? The thing itself is the beautiful we admire—not its author, who may be an ungainly cripple—therefore what we have to do with is not the creative, but the created.

Mr. BEST did not wonder at Mr. Holyoake disliking metaphysics, and adhering to the practical, for all our greatest philosophers had admitted the existence of an intelligent governing principle. Bacon, Locke, Newton, and others gave him no countenance in his unbelief, and to whom he Mr. H. would have a difficulty in replying. Did not wonder at Mr. H.'s partiality for the maggot, a fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind—contended that to elevate our moral characters, moral attributes must be given to mind, not to matter—did not see what warrant an atheist can have for asserting tyranny to be a necessary result of the belief in a deity. An atheistic government and people would be quite as likely to have the elements of discord and

confusion as others—all the asserted moral excellencies of atheism may exist in a christian community, and, in the end, the christian is more safe than the atheist.

Mr. McCULLOUGH thought the last speaker had not even striven to show the moral advantages of god-belief. The reason of there having been but few, if any, avowed atheists in past time, was on account of the worldly advantages to be reaped from pandering to religious prejudices, and also of the barbarous cruelties which awaited the honest expression of opinion. It had always been more convenient for a government to sacrifice life and brand opinions with infamy, rather than allow such opinions to be proved true. Bacon, however, had spoken favourably of atheism. The new testament abounds in immoralities—for example, "Be ye obedient to the higher powers, for the powers that be are of god." Did not god-worship lead to king-worship, and king-worship to man-worship? Did not Charles the first, acting on this principle, refuse obedience to the people's will, and cause all the evils of civil war thereby? Are not queens fluttered into the belief that they are god's vicegerents, by the base hypocrisy of fawning courtiers, disrobing to preserve the royal feet from the contamination of the filthy earth? The most degrading immorality finds a licence in the bible—the most atrocious cruelties perpetrated on the human race, are but echoes of bible records—and he was happy to say, that though there never was, yet he hoped there would yet be, a nation of atheists.

Mr. WRIGHT thought there had been a commonwealth of atheists in France—at the revolution atheists took the lead in public affairs, and innumerable murders were the result. Said that the new testament abounds in moral precepts, and that christians in consequence were doing all the good possible—they were freeing the slaves, building model prisons (laughter), forming city missions, &c. Man's superiority over the brute shown by his foreknowledge of death.

The chairman said there was time for Mr. Holyoake to briefly reply, and put it to the meeting if they wished that he should—which being assented to—

Mr. HOLYOAKE said he had been asked by a previous speaker to justify his objection to Jesus. The great men of Greece and Rome lived to some purpose and died for some great end, but judging of Christ, as a man, he lived to little purpose and died to less. Christ's much-lauded sermon, among other foolish things, blessed "the poor in spirit." Now the poor in spirit were unfortunate beings—they were poor in energy—poor in moral purpose—they were *poor* specimens of humanity. Christ had neither

uttered commendable sentiments, nor set a noble example. Mr. H. defended the French revolution, and the character of Robespierre. He said our own christian government were preparing bloodier scenes for Ireland than the French revolutionist ever enacted. There was the *Times* newspaper—*par excellence* a christian journal—had a page in every copy written in blood. Let christians free themselves from base atrocities before they calumniate a great people's defence of liberty! The horrors of the French revolution were born of religion—the revolutionists were obliged to strike down religious tyrants, or be struck down themselves, and he (Mr. H.) would say better that one tyrant die, than that 10,000 honest men should perish.

Mr. H. seemed to make a deep impression on another crowded audience. C.D.

To the Editor of the Oracle of Reason.

MR. EDITOR.—I have received a letter from Mr. Henry Hartzburgh, of Newcastle-on-Tyne—the secretary of the Society for the Suppression of Superstition—the society to which your article in No. 95, and to which my notice in No. 89, relate. In my communication I mentioned that I spoke of a *report of a report* which appeared in the *New Moral World*. This is true, and Mr. Hartzburgh's complaint is that the editor of the *New Moral World* did not present a fair portraiture of his sentiments, as set forth in his *original* report. Mr. H. contends that had the report appeared *entire* it would not warrant the construction put upon it. In justice to Mr. H. you will insert this explanation, for though we promptly condemn narrow prejudice, neither you nor I would, for a moment, lend ourselves to perpetuate a misrepresentation. Mr. Hartzburgh I believe to be in every respect an estimable man, and an indefatigable friend of liberty. He is an Israelite, one of "god's chosen people," and I can safely add that if the individual referred to, had selected all his "people" of Henry Hartzburgh's stamp, they would have been the glory, instead of the disgrace, of the world, and we should now have neither vice nor superstition to write against. G. J. H.

[As a general principle, men are far more tardy in correcting errors, than in committing them. Mr. Hartzburgh would only have done right by *immediately* removing the erroneous impression which the report in the socialist organ was certain to produce. But when Mr. Holyoake's remarks appeared, that which was previously a simple act of justice, became an imperative duty, the neglect of which was a wilful deceiving of the public. The willingness of the editor of the socialist

organ to do anything to injure this paper, is well known—and, doubtless, he seized with delight the opportunity afforded him by Mr. Hartzburgh's report, for gratifying his propensity at another's expence—for what appeared *was in the report*, although perhaps much garbled. Where men will not act honestly, until they are soundly thrashed, I am an advocate for soundly thrashing them to compel them to do so—and I do not regret a single expression which I used in reference to the Newcastle Society, in No. 95.—W. C.]

To the Editor of the Oracle of Reason.

SIR.—In the first paragraph of the first letter contained in the *Investigator*, addressed to the members of the John-st. institution, Mr. Southwell expresses his surprise at the introduction of the god-question for discussion within the walls of their institution, which would lead us to infer that that gentleman does not expect from free inquirers the fruits which are seasonable and reasonable, and which exclusively belong to them. But in the name of a few friends of socialism I would beg to inform Mr. Southwell and the atheistical public that the question is gaining considerable ground in the attention of the intelligent inhabitants of this town. It is true that that question is not discussed in our social institution, but it is not because it is not allowed by the managers of the branch, neither because it is not thought desirable, but for lack of opposition. For this reason a few of our friends have attended a discussion-class formed and held in Mr. Bairstow's public room, which has for its object the free investigation of all systems and opinions. Soon after the operations of the class commenced, the subject "Chartism *versus* Socialism" was discussed, which lasted for several meetings—questions connected with the welfare of the human race followed in succession—ultimately a chartist proposed to open and take the affirmative of the question, "Is there a creative power, and what is it?" which question has been adjourned three times. Mr. Bairstow has used his eloquence in defence of a something superior to the vulgar traditions and opinions of men; and likewise superior to the absurd idea of the eternity of matter, which idea that gentleman says leads us to an eternal *pig*, an eternal *tree*, and an eternal *man*—this something is the god of nature, as exhibited in the laws of nature. Of the treatment of the negative of the question modesty forbids me saying a word—only take this as an earnest of what is being done by a few individuals in this locality.

Leicester, Oct. 16, 1843. T. E.

Nos. 1 and 8 are now in print, and may be obtained by ordering.

Copied from the "Youth's Magazine," for June, 1818.

"Written by an idiot—which shows what a *correct* idea even idiots may have of their creator, and of his goodness.

"Could we with ink the ocean fill,
Was the whole earth of parchment made,
Was every single stick a quill,
Was every man a scribe by trade;
To write the love of god alone,
Would drain the ocean dry;
Nor would the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky!"

It was a work of supererogation, to tell us the above was written by an *idiot*. But even the religious can occasionally speak the truth, when it serves their purposes. Doubtless the idiot who wrote it, and the idiots who printed it, considered the loss of reason a special evidence of god's love—and if a man may use his reason to his own damnation, why, to be deprived of so dangerous a faculty must be a blessing. I hope never to be so honoured by his lordship, for I love reason more than his love.—W. C.

AN ELEGY ON MR. SHELLEY.

Written soon after his Death.

BY ALLEN DAVENPORT.

SING, weeping muse! ah sing awhile of him
Who conquered prejudice and broke her fetters—
Tore from the mind the intellectual film,
And half reformed the dreaming world of letters.

Wildly majestic, daringly sublime,
Though future worlds ne'er occupied his care,
Of conscious life beyond the reach of time
He had no hope, and therefore felt no fear.

A god superior to humanity,
His philosophic mind ne'er understood,
The cant of priests to him was vanity,
The heaven he sought was that of doing good.

And yet shall his imperishable mind,
Deeply engraved on adamantine pages,
Excite the admiration of mankind,
Through an eternal chain of future ages.

The philosophic Plato reasoned well,
Who stamped the soul with immortality,
For, though in prime of manhood Shelley fell,
His soul still lives—"Queen Mab" can never die.

Could he be wrong? his "life was in the right,"
Because in things unknown he would not trust,
Can god spurn such a man, and with delight
Smile on the pious knave? Then god's unjust!

NOTICE.

RECEIVED.—J. Smith. J. H., Argyle-street, Glasgow. A Constant Reader, Manchester. Koen and Others.

Just Published—Price Fourpence.

THE QUESTIONS OF ZAPATA; a Spanish Friar, and Professor of Theology in the University of Salamanca. Presented to the Junta of Doctors, 1629. The questions were suppressed, and the author consigned to the stake, at Valladolid, in 1631. Abounding with Extraordinary Illustrations of the word of god. London: Hetherington, 40, Holywell-street, Strand.

INFIDELITY IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.—“*But the extreme superstition of the popular creed, the conversation of Jews and mohametans, the unbounded admiration of pagan genius and virtue, the natural tendency of many minds to doubt and perceive difficulties, which the schoolmen were apt to find everywhere, and nowhere to solve, joined to the irreligious spirit of the aristotelian philosophy, especially as modified by Averroes, could not but engender a secret tendency towards infidelity, the course of which may be traced with ease in the writings of those ages. Thus the tale of the three rings in Boccace, whether original or not, may be reckoned among the sports of a sceptical philosophy. But a proof, not less decisive, that the blind faith we ascribe to the middle ages, was by no means universal, results from the numerous vindications of christianity written in the fifteenth century. Eichhorn, after referring to several passages in the works of Petrarch, mentions defences of religion by Marsilius, Ficinus, Alfonso de Spina, a converted Jew, Savanarola, Æneas Sylvius, Pius of Mirandola. He gives an analysis of the first, which, in its course of argument, differs little from modern apologies of the same class.*”—(Hallam’s Literature of Europe, from 1400 to 1440, vol. 1, p. 189, 91.)—Hallam gives as a cause of infidelity, the extreme superstition of a creed. According to this reasoning, popery would make more, and protestantism fewer infidels in countries where they were respectively the established religions. Unless altered by other circumstances, this is very often the case. It is a common topic with protestant apologists of christianity, that the unreasonableness of popery makes unbelievers—but the reasonableness of protestantism is of a conservative character, and deprives infidels of all arguments against their reformed faith. The *Edinburgh Review*, dwelling upon the invincibility of christianity, supported by protestantism, warns the puseyites of the tendency, which experience declares their revival of popish superstitions will have in reviving infidelity. These protestant reviewers flatter themselves they have laid infidelity low, and say they will have to do their work over again, if puseyism reinstates the dragon for these champions to overcome. The atheism of the period of the French revolution has often been said to have been consequent on popery being the religion of France. It will be observed, that Boccace was an Italian. The writers mentioned by Hallam in defence of christianity, were all of that nation, which goes pretty far to prove who were the infidels. Later, Jordano, Bruno, and Vanini, the first modern atheists, both burnt, were Italians brought up as Roman catholics.

PICTURE OF A SAINT.—I have seen several of the paintings of Guercino. One was the representation of the founder of the carthusians exercising his austerities in the desert, with a youth as his attendant kneeling beside him at an altar; on another altar stood a skull and a crucifix; and around were the rocks and the trees of the wilderness. I never saw such a figure as this fellow. His face was wrinkled like a dried snake’s skin, and drawn in long hard lines; his very hands were wrinkled. He looked like an animated mummy. He was clothed in a loose dress of death-coloured flannel, such as you might fancy a shroud might be, after it had wrapped a corpse a month or two. It had a yellow, putrified, ghastly hue, which it cast on all the objects around, so that the hands and face of the carthusian and his companion were jaundiced by this sepulchral glimmer. Why write books against religion, when we may hang up such pictures? But the world either will not, or cannot, see.—*Shelley’s Letters from Italy.*

SUBSCRIPTIONS.

For the London Anti-Persecution Union.

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As the Scottish Trials are approaching, it is hoped that the Collectors of the Anti-Persecution Union will spare no exertions in collecting funds, and that they will make their remittances by the end of October. G. J. H.

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Printed and Published by WILLIAM CHILTON,
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Saturday, Oct. 28, 1843.

THE
ORACLE OF REASON:
Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE."

First Editor—Charles Southwell, imprisoned for twelve months and fined £100, for Blasphemy in No. 4.
Second Editor—George Jacob Holyoake, imprisoned for six months, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.
Third Editor—Thomas Paterson, imprisoned for one month, for Blasphemous Placards, in London.
Vendors—George Adams, imprisoned for one month for selling No. 25, in Cheltenham; and
Harriet Adams, his wife, arrested for selling No. 4, in the same town.

No. 99.] EDITED BY WILLIAM CHILTON. [PRICE 1D.

**PARLIAMENTARY CANT AND
SACRED SLANG.**

And I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back parts.—*Jew Book.*

IN a former article on parliamentary religion, I said there is not a charge made against the religion of the Indians, which I could not produce as having been made against christianity, and of which I could not more or less convict it. Macaulay, speaking of the Somnauth gates, said, "To what religion is it that the offering was made? It was to lingamism—to a religion which is polytheism in its worst form, which in its nature presents the most degrading, the most odious, the most polluted representation of the supreme being. It is that doctrine which, more than any other, is *fundamental* to everything in the Hindoo religion, and it is in violation of all those principles which we are taught to consider as the mainspring of christianity." Here I join issue with Mr. Macaulay, and have the law and the prophets with me. I say what god showed to Moses instead of "his glory"—divine undoubtedly as it was—yet in its nature presents the most degrading, the most odious, the most polluted representation of the supreme being. Lingamism is the worship of the organs of generation. I should therefore say the christian doctrine in Exodus xxxiii. is much more *fundamental* than the belief of the Hindoos—I should say the difference in their favour is as great as the sight of glory would have been to shame, had the christian deity exhibited the one instead of the other. I think I showed in a previous paper, on prophecies, that Exodus xxxiii. embraced a fundamental doctrine of christianity, the only visible thing seen of god, which he gave to make understood his invisible things—that it was the open gate behind when the front entrance was shut to sinners—that it was the revelation to revelation, and the seat upon which the catholic church very naturally sat. Considering the light we look upon what is mentioned as shown to Moses in comparison with the front, the moral effects of the worship of the one in comparison with the other, the crime which devotion to the former would insinuate, when the results of the latter would become virtues—

makes me think, speaking humanly, the *fundamental* doctrine of christianity, not only an insult to truth, but an act of treason against civilisation and against humanity. These fundamental principles are, I believe, and have shown to be the mainspring of christianity, but I should say the generative doctrines of hindooism were not only the main spring of humanity, but of the world, perhaps of the universe. The one is death, the other is life. The one is the destroyer, the other the preserver. Siva the one, Crishna the other. Christianity the one, hindooism the other. The one the end, the other the beginning. The one behind, the other before.

Hume, in his dialogues on natural religion, argues against an intelligent power being the supreme being, on the ground that generation is a superior cause to intelligence. What intelligence could produce its own kind, or make life? What are the feeble works of men's minds compared to the reproduction of animated matter. This argument did make some ancient philosophers suppose the worlds were formed by generation.

Sylvain Marechal, in his dictionary of atheists, pp. 248-9, says of the lingam, "At the bottom of the most ancient temples in India, is found placed a colossal figure, twelve cubits in height, as many as there are signs in the zodiac. This statue, or rather this group, represents at once a man and a woman, who hold together and adhere one to the other, so much so that the two make only one, and so well is it contrived that the half of the head, one arm, one hand, a side of the body belongs to each of them. Each of them, however, is man and woman, ostensibly and perfectly distinct the one from the other. It is the Phallus of the Egyptians, of the Greeks, and the Romans. Mountains and seas, rivers and fishes, animals and plants are represented on this double body. Upon the stomach of the man the sun is painted, the moon upon the bosom of the woman. The face looks to the east, the right side is to the north, and the left to the south. The Hindoos adore, under this caricature, their great divinity. To men instructed in the national antiquities, it is the symbol of the active and passive principle of generation, it is the character of nature,

which possesses and includes in itself cause and effect, which has need only of itself to be and to exist eternally. It is the image of eternity, of the all-mightiness and universality of nature, it is the world. It is, in a word, the universe, the grand whole, the god Pan, or the Jove of Greece and Rome. To sum up, it is spinosism, or rather *it is atheism per omnia*." If this be atheism in its more pleasing form, I should say the appearance of god to Moses, conveyed atheism, however truthful it might be, yet in a most disgusting character. If the one implied all the affirmative qualities, the other seems to refer to all the negatives in the universe. But not content with this dirty symbol of nothingness and destruction, the christians must needs have their active principle, their preserver, Jesus and his church, under the obscene images in which Solomon illustrates the procreation of the species. Thus the christians have symbolical badges, which if the scriptures, as St. Paul says, are given for their instruction and example, teach them a kind of worship much worse than any Mr. Macaulay meant and could not mention—and the very forms of christian worship are connected with the worst forms of prostitution, which the fanatical member for the puritanical city of Edinburgh had ever seen or read of in the temples of India.

We may gather from the writings of Saint Paul that all the abuses which he charges to the Romans were quickly introduced among his own converts. The incestuous conduct of one is spoken of as approved of by the rest, though it far exceeded in enormity, St. Paul says, anything done by the pagans. They met once a-day at their love-feasts or sacraments, and as regularly got drunk—we may therefore imagine the other consequences which must have resulted from such a meeting of the two sexes. All experience tells us what must have been the result, and therefore shows that there must have been truth in the accusation of pagans against christians, that their love-feasts were scenes of lust. In fact, we may fancy what feasts, called *love-feasts*, in celebration of affection between all mankind, commenced by wine and carried on to intoxication, must have realised in expression of that passion they were met to commemorate.

The christians soon charged each other with the grossest practices in their religion, when split into sects. These accusations have been suppressed by those who remained uppermost in the struggle, and we have only those against heresies preserved. As Bayle and Strauss suggest, it is a great pity we have not the writings of those called heretics, as they would point to the texts which authorised their proceedings, or they could show other gospels in their favour, or at least tradition. They have probably been misre-

presented, and we do not know that they were not the orthodox christians, since their history has been only told by their enemies. Passages in Paul's epistle are said to refer to them. They were from the origin of christianity, they were very numerous, and of course thought themselves the only true christians. They therefore belong as much to christianity, as the sect at Somnauth belonged to hindooism. They were undoubtedly the most learned and philosophical of the christians, and were therefore called gnostics, the useful-knowledge men of the day. When the more ignorant and orthodox, and therefore the most intolerant and persecuting, came into power, one hundred thousand of these heretics were slaughtered in the Roman empire. I cannot mention their alleged rites—those who would know particulars, must search the latin notes of church histories, and the article in Bayle's dictionary. In a word, the ceremonies of these christians corresponded with those said to have been performed at Somnauth. Their principles seem to have been much the same—there are details given of these christians, which I think Macaulay could not find equalled by his Hindoos. As in *fundamental* principles, Exodus chap. xxxiii., verses 18 to 23, so in all others, the christians have ever arrived at a singularity of excellence, unapproachable by the religious of other creeds. This fact is one of the strongest evidences in favour of the truth of the christian religion, and recommends it most strongly to our faith. Search the world, and you will not find the like to the doctrines and practices found in the scriptures and the history of christianity. There it stands pre-eminent in foolishness, an offence to reason, a stumbling-block to virtue—let not Macaulay then tamper with orthodox faith, and endeavour to show us that any other religion was more monstrous in its vices, more unnatural in its lusts, more ferocious in its cruelties, more incomprehensible to common sense, more opposed to humanity. If he could do it, this divinity would at once fall, and become no more than man—heaven no more than earth—and the fundamental principle of the christian religion, the demonstration of the deity's existence, as set down in Exodus chap. xxxiii. ver. 18 to 23, would cease to be, when no longer followed up by similar evidences, and proved by all the reverse arguments and positions in nature.

Just Published—Price Fourpence.

THE QUESTIONS OF ZAPATA; a Spanish Friar, and Professor of Theology in the University of Salamanca. Presented to the Junta of Doctors, 1629. The questions were suppressed, and the author consigned to the stake, at Valladolid, in 1631. Abounding with Extraordinary Illustrations of the word of god London: Hetherington, 40, Holywell-street, Strand.

DISCUSSION ON THE QUESTION
"IS BELIEF IN A DEITY OF
ANY KIND MORALLY BENE-
FICIAL," AT BRANCH A 1.

Second Night.

AFTER the usual reading of the rules, and minutes of last evening, Mr. Holyoake resumed the debate.

MR. HOLYOAKE.—One of the most important axioms established in modern times was this—that no inquiry was without its use. When Julius Cæsar retired from the luxury of the court, to fortify his constitution by exercise, there were many who could not see the use of it, but its use was seen in his great achievements, and the lasting reputation which he built up. People could not see the use of the subterranean study and half-shaven head of Demosthenes, but the result appeared in the liberty of Athens, and the defeat of Philip—and who knew but that these discussions—recondite and useless as they had been called—might aid in the defeat of superstition itself? He believed that they would reap from them a large measure of utility—vigour of thought, clearness of perception, singleness of purpose, and new energies for moral improvement. It had been implied that the mere love of debate induced them to appear there—but some persons reasoned as though they groped for arguments in the very pit of improper intentions. The atheistical party aimed only to be useful—and therefore it was, that neither implied nor open censures had turned them aside. He had charged the belief in deities as being morally pernicious, and he stood there to support that charge by facts. Bacon, with his characteristic penetration, had condemned the doctrine of final causes, for men assumed that deity had caused this or that, and then inquired no further. This practice not only prevented investigation but it vitiated reasoning. The concordists at Ham once debated the propriety of taking milk, and, starting with the proposition, as an axiom, that the milk of every animal was *designed* for its kind, they concluded that they could not take the milk of the cow unless they entered themselves as so many calves. Utility was the true ground to debate the question on. If milk was nutritious he (Mr. H.) would think it right to take it, though all the gods at once had designed it for a different purpose. The people at Ham had amiable vagaries, and he respected their eccentricities, but the dogma of "design" marred their reasonings. The corn-law-league, who were engaged in the three-fold object of benefitting the common people, humbling the aristocracy, and aggrandising themselves, had sent a card to all the electors in the kingdom, urging them

to vote for repeal candidates—because, "above all their vote would be recorded on high." This was wrong. The people above had nothing to do with the question. Besides, there was nothing *higher* than justice. Men ought to be taught that justice was the greatest consideration. If the corn laws were unjust that was conclusive against them, and if they were just he (Mr. H.) would vote for their continuance, though it should be recorded in all the heavens the corn-law-league ever heard of. Utility again only was in question, and all departures from it were injurious. George Loveless, one of the Dorchester labourers, related that a fellow-convict was once about to shoot another convict, but dropped his gun as soon as he thought of hell-fire. The misery he might inflict, the hopes he might mar, the expectant wife and family whom he might disappoint for ever, moved not the heart of this monster of piety, he thought only of hell. He might be a christian, but he was an insensate, sordid, selfish wretch. Had that man been taught humanity as he had religion, he would have shrunk from the act of murder, without the coward fear of hell. But piety did not cultivate human sympathy. They might as well—

Talk of spring to the trampled flower,
Of light to the fallen star;
Of glory to him who in danger's hour
Lies cold on the field of war,

as expect to awaken kindly emotions in the breast of a truly god-fearing man. Religion obscured properly human considerations, and created the evils it pretended to cure. That religious sanctions were no longer needed, the success of Father Mathew in Ireland proved. Dr. Wiseman had shown that the oath taken was a *moral* one, and if a moral oath would bind the bigotted Irish from the allurements of intemperance, a religious sanction was not needed in any case. Religious delusions were supposed pleasing, if so, it was no more censurable to dispel them than it was to alarm the sensualist or warn the drunkard. Men became drunk with superstition, and reason was destroyed. For persons to talk of the atheist's "dry world of realities" was as wise as talking of dry waters. The highest glories of poetry were but the faint pictures of realities. All imagination fell short of nature's beauties. Atheism was the genius of equality. It alone taught men their true position and proper interest. Milton had said that—

To know
That which before us lies in daily life
IS PRIME WISDOM.

That was the wisdom of atheism. Mr. H. spoke of imitation in relation to the influence of theism, and said that as copying made but

second-rate artists so it produced but second-rate men. When Bacon said atheism left men to "sense, reputation, philosophy, and the laws," and as atheism was the opposite of theism, his words implied that religion did not leave them to such influences. Therefore as men of sense, they would see which to prefer.

Mr. C. J. SMITH explained for Mr. H.'s special benefit the difference in meaning of the words atheist and anti-theist—said that, according to his notion, the sceptic was an atheist. He would bring the word anti-theist in more frequent use, as applying to Mr. H. and others. Mr. H. had said that imitators or copyists were always second-rate men—were not his first-rate men imitators, copyists of nature? The picture of Hayden, in the Pantheon, Oxford-street, was full of faults because the author attempted to be original, instead of a copyist of nature. Atheism tends to subvert the whole social system. Men acknowledging no superior, children would follow their example and acknowledge no superiority in the parent. Man has none too many organs, why not exercise his veneration, and render homage—the child to the parent, man to superior worth? The evils which afflict society are the results of external circumstances—religion is not an external circumstance. Atheists are unable to appreciate the religious feeling—the temperance pledge, as administered by Father Matthew, understood to be a religious obligation.

Mr. BURN considered all things occupying much thought and producing no evident good, morally bad, such was the god-idea. Abraham had offered his son Isaac, Jephthah his daughter, Juggernaut its innumerable victims, thus proving the god-idea morally pernicious, the offspring of ignorance, and the tool of cheats. Children are to remain uneducated unless tutored into god-belief by the church. Man has prayed to god, but received no acknowledgment, he should henceforth depend upon himself and he would be happy.

Mr. BEST considered religion the main-spring of human morals, and productive of that happiness which no law of nature can alloy—religion may be abused, as also may love, charity, etc., but in themselves they were morally good and tending to render men happy. The christian has two motives to abstain from evil, the atheist but one. Considered natural consequences a very trifling stimulant to moral actions.

Mr. McCULLOUGH, referring to Mr. C. J. Smith's charge that atheists had brought forward no argument against the morality of god-belief, said his audience were too keen not to perceive that Mr. Smith had sat down without adducing the shadow of an evidence

in support of the affirmative of the question Religion was nothing more than fashionable superstition, both known by being inseparably connected with priests, creeds, and gods. It had been said the atheist had but one motive to virtue, true, but a sufficient one—christians, with their double stimulus, filled our gaols, hulks, penitentiaries, and penal settlements with criminals, our workhouses with paupers, our streets with the law's myrmidons. While crime against god can be expiated by money, as in our christian communities, morality must necessarily be at a low ebb.

A GENTLEMAN said he had come to see Mr. Holyoake—he had now both seen and heard him, and was glad, but thought that Mr. H. had not done justice to christianity—that it had by him, and others, been misrepresented, and made to appear what it was not. Compared it in one respect with the social system—Mr. Owen he knew to be a good man, and believed the system so too, but neither the one nor the other were justly chargeable with the faults or follies, or vices, of all who assume to be expounders of such system. The sum and substance of christianity as taught by its founder was, "love to god, and your neighbour." But if this precept be violated, it was no fault of its author. If all things be moral which promote our happiness, so then is the belief in a future state. What more delightful conception can there be, than that of a reunion hereafter of a mother and child, or wife and husband? What at the same time more harmless than the personification of one's affections? man makes his god it is true, according to the degree of his education. The mere fact of infinity being indemonstrable a sufficient excuse for the play of the imagination. The calm and dignified bearing of this gentleman won him the esteem of the whole of a numerous audience.

It having been decided by the meeting that Mr. Holyoake should reply,

Mr. HOLYOAKE said, that he wished that the gentleman who had just sat down, had oftener favoured them with his wisdom and experience. He (Mr. H.) was aware that christianity had not been fully stated, and he regretted that persons competent—like the last speaker—had not appeared in its defence. It was no easy matter to find out what was good in christianity. A short time ago he (Mr. H.) had, in Worcester, praised St. Matthew's account of the last judgment, because it bore out the view that not they who believed most, but they who had done best, were to be rewarded—when up rose a good christian and charged him (Mr. H.) with having *garbled* the scriptures—for Christ had said that "he who believed should be saved and he who did not should

be damned." Since that event he had been unable to make anything certain of either Christ or the scriptures. The desire of the youth to see his mother hereafter was very affectionate. But because such hopes were pleasing, were they justified in declaring them *certain*?—that was the question. With refined distinctions he did not deal, but with broad influences and well-understood effects. In practice the hope of the future was found to be effeminate. Shades of piety there were, not far removed from morality, but his quarrel was with the national system, real, solid, and expensive, built on supposition only. He aimed to show that, and shake the system down. Morality was distinct from religion. Morality did that which was useful, and asked not, and cared not, whether the gods approved or no. The christian took the will of god for his guide, and there was no one competent to state that will; if he went right it was by accident and not by design. Mr. H. then briefly replied to the other speakers, and the meeting adjourned.

THE PHILALETHEAN SOCIETY.

To the Editor of the Oracle of Reason.

MR. GILLESPIE'S *a priori* argument, most courteously forwarded in sheets by the secretary of the "Philaethean Society, for Peaceably Suppressing Infidelity," was neglected by me, and me only. I received the last sheet, and acknowledged it on behalf of Mr. Paterson, at the time when he was undergoing the course of suffering servilely prescribed by lickspittle police lawyers, and brutally administered by the petty Nero of Tothill-fields. I plead guilty to the negligence, and beg to apologise to the philaetheans.

Had god-belief, either *a priori* or a *posteriori*, produced justice-loving societies for "peaceably suppressing infidelity," as numerous or influential as those for violently, plunderingly abolishing it, my time, property, health, and almost caste in society, would not have been so nearly destroyed, and I would have been enabled to have paid the respect due to the polite attentions of the philaetheans. So much for the past. I do not purpose contributing, otherwise than casually, to the pages of the *Oracle*, for the remainder of the volume, but should it be continued beyond the 104th number, or a substitute be started, as is in contemplation, I pledge myself either to take up the controversy, or see it placed in competent hands.

M. Q. R.

[Mr. Southwell, in a private letter, says, "About Gillespie—I shall be willing to consider his 'Argument,' after coming trials—can't before."—Ed.]

THE REPEAL AND THE CHARTER.

DURING the time the repeal question has been in agitation, the press has made a comparison of Ireland before and after the union, with and without its so-called parliament. They have, by a studious exclusion of the facts of the case, inferred from what an Irish parliament was before, what it would be under entirely different circumstances. Seats in the parliament of Ireland were entirely confined to protestants—and not until the last moment of its existence were catholics even capable of being electors. The protestants, it is well known, have all the landed property of the country, the roman catholics, the original proprietors, having lost it by frequent confiscations, and long been disabled by penal laws from holding, transferring, or purchasing land. Thus was the government abridged to a parcel of conquerors, in order to continue the terms of their conquest. The press would make of such a non-representation, a comparison with later and more real parliaments, and one proposed to be elected by universal suffrage, and a free choice of members in the electoral body. Now the danger is becoming more imminent, and recourse may be had to arms, in assertion of rights the press adopt new assumptions with regard to the course of the conflict and its results. Suppose, say they, Ireland was successful in a first outbreak, would she be able to withstand the immense forces by sea and land England would direct against her? This is supposing the Irish would be so very foolish as to wait whilst the power of England, in possession of the money, was allowed quietly to make its preparations. The fault James II. committed was waiting for William III. It was long before the conqueror of England was able to collect forces and obtain funds to proceed to the re-conquest of Ireland. The Irish, if successful in a rising, should precipitate themselves on England, and with common courage might make an easy conquest of her, undefended by troops and fortifications. The Irish should not wait till they were surrounded by ships, and if not fought with starved out, but whilst there is no fleet riding between them and England, they should seize every steam and sailing vessel, every plank that would transfer the scene of operations from themselves to their enemies. Liverpool and Manchester would be at their mercy, a part of the country exceeding in population that of London and the south, and not unwilling to join against the government. Then their united forces might be able to march upon the capital and insist upon the charter. The weathercock of the *Times* points to this consummation, in a leading article on the amalgamation of the repealers and the chartists.

THE SCOTCH GOD WAR.

To the Editor of the Oracle of Reason.

38, West-Register-street, Edinburgh,
Oct. 25, 1843.

DEAR SIR.—The "Man Paterson" was, on Monday evening last, served with an indictment to appear before the High Court of Justiciary here, on Monday, the 8th of November next. Robinson's was also served that evening. The latter indictment is, *mutatis mutandis*, as the lawyers say, but a counterpart of his former one, and I therefore waive an enumeration of its features; the former (Paterson's) is built up of eight or nine hundred *Oracles*—copies of Paine—the *Investigator*—several hundred placards—Dale Owen's pamphlets, etc., from which the lord advocate, with wonderful sagacity, has culled the following, as being worthy of especial notice at the forthcoming trial, namely:

- "The Bible an Improper Book for Youth." (Copious extracts are made from this little eye-sore).
- "God versus Paterson." (Southwell's "Jew Book" article has been quoted in part from this "tissue of abuse.")
- Diderot's "Thoughts." (Large quotation from this.)
- "The Protestant's Progress." (Good quotation from this.)
- Carlile's "Holy Bible" Tract. (Quoted in full.)
- "God Checkmated by the Devil." (Quoted in full.)
- "Oracle of Reason," No. 52. (Home-thrust quoted in full.)
- "Oracle of Reason," No. 85. (Quotation from "Cant of Christianity.") And—
- "Thomas Paterson, the only Scottish Atheistical Publisher." (Advertisement.)

From the above list, you will agree with me that the lord advocate has shown himself to be an admirable "pointer." The dog's owners, however, will find it difficult to bring down *infidel* game.

Can't afford to say more on these matters at present. Busy preparing for the levee on Monday week. I'll write then.

By the way, John McNeil, the Campsie victim, writes me that he resumed his "old trade" in that village, on Thursday last. While standing at the corner of a street, lustily bawling "Blasphemy for the Million!" Mr. Maines, the constable, ventured to approach. "Well," said the heroic constable, "what have you got there?" "Nothing less," replied Mac, "than blasphemy for the million, and I think you and the Rev. Mr. Lee would have done better never to have taken any notice of me," in which observation the conservator of the public peace ac-

quiesced in these memorable words: "Yes, it would have been better, for THE VILLAGE HAS BEEN IN AN UPROAR EVER SINCE!" Santa Maria! the world is upside down—policemen talking like philosophers—judges like fools! We must elevate Maines to the bench directly; I'll be sixpence myself towards a wig and gown. "Boss."

Mr. Jeffery was bound over on the 19th ult, in £20, to keep the peace for twelve months, for endeavouring to speak at the public meeting in the Waterloo Rooms, Edinburgh, called to commiserate with Dr. Kalley. Paterson did not attend, but sent a note stating his disinclination to "dance attendance on parsons or others."

RIGHTS.

MR. G. POWELL, Bristol, has sent a very vehement letter, disputing the correctness of the article on rights, recommended in No. 69 of the *Oracle*.

He is of opinion that one passage in the article favours the god-idea, and he seems to think that it is inconsistent in the *Oracle* to recommend anything favouring that notion.

I admit that one passage does favour the god-idea, but it would be very cynical to condemn an article, the general scope, spirit, and object of which is useful, because a small part is erroneous. I still think that the article is fraught with valuable information.

G. Powell contends that we do possess inherent rights, which musty parchments, priests and statesmen, can neither give nor take away.

I do not profess by a few hasty dashes of the pen, to settle this very important, much contested, and little understood, question. It will be something to throw but a taper's light upon the dark ocean of such a subject.

Political philosophers, a class of men by no means too numerous, all seem to agree, that *right* is that which is *ruled* or *ordered*. If I understand what they mean, rather than what they say, the question may be stated thus:

There are no political rights, except those which *law* establishes. Where there is no government, no political right exists—because there can be no political *wrong*. Every man acts as he is inclined. But the moment a government is set up, that government orders that this or that shall be done, and such orders constitute political *right*. But a radical would exclaim, "What if the government order, or privilege, the few to live upon the many—is it *right* to do so?" Yes—*politically* right. The English government, as most modern governments do, professes to appoint only that which is *useful* and proper for the welfare of the state—and

every law on the statute book is supposed to be useful on the whole. Should I be asked, is it useful that only ten pound householders should vote at elections, I should answer no. I believe it would be wise to permit every man to vote upon the conditions laid down in the "Charter." As a chartist, I may contend that my claim *ought* to be allowed by the government, and that the *right* of voting should be conferred upon me, but, for me to say I *have a right* to vote, would be nonsense. Let me go to a polling-booth and exclaim, "I have a right to vote," and insist upon it—unless my name was enrolled upon the electors' list—a policeman would hand me to the station-house, as a disturber of public business and a violator of the law.

When the moralist talks of *right*, he refers to what *ought to be*—but when the politician uses the term *right*, he refers to what *is* by law established.

We have the sweet word *fair*. We say a fair girl, when we allude to her clear smooth skin—we say a fair day, and we mean fine bright weather—we say fair dealing, when we mean equal justice. Now what should we think of the precision of that speaker who should use the word fair in the sense of fair dealing, when he meant a fair girl? So of the word *right* in the mouths of politicians, it is used to speak of what *is*, when they are talking, like the moralist, of what *ought to be*.

These remarks may somewhat assist the political tyro. They are desultory, and not so illustrated by example as, perhaps, the argument requires—but as my prescribed limits are reached, I shall leave the question for the present. When I return to it, several points shall be illustrated by extracts from our known political speakers. The other night I went to hear Mr. H. Vincent lecture in the National Association Hall, on "Democracy." His intentions are doubtless as good as my own, and I approve the object of his lecture, as I am a democrat—but as far as the philosophy of his subject was concerned, his lecture was but a specimen of how long a man might talk without his words meaning anything. Mr. Vincent is a moral-force chartist, but his lecture amounted to physical force, with god-almighty put in place of the pike. So rich was the food for contemplation afforded by Mr. V., that I shall make a separate article upon his lecture, though ten years elapse first.

There is abundant apology for circumscibed information of the theory of rights, on the part of chartists generally. But Mr. Vincent is differently situated. He has access to Dr. Black, a gentleman well-known to the politicians, and complete suffragists of London. Dr. Black is profoundly

versed in these topics, and communicates his information to others with great facility.

G. J. H.

ADDRESS OF THE ANTI-PERSECUTION UNION.

The following address has just been issued by the A. P. U. and is commended to the careful attention of its friends and the public:

Messrs. Finlay, Robinson, Paterson, and McNeil, of Scotland, and Dr. Kalley, of Madeira, are the present victims of atrocious prosecutions for blasphemy. The Anti-Persecution Union continues its exertions in defence of these most unjustly imprisoned men, and makes all honorable appeals to the friends of liberty on their behalf.

Some persons object to the sentiments these parties hold, and others to their manner of expounding them; but the Union would respectfully submit, that it is no man's province to decide what opinions his fellow-man shall entertain, or in what manner he shall put them forth. The friend of liberty is called upon, only to see that no one is imprisoned, or otherwise legally injured for freedom of expression. If foolish or useless opinions are advanced, they can be refuted; and if they are beneficial, no power should be suffered to suppress them.

The christian side of the argument against blasphemy prosecutions is thus set forth in the *Dundee Herald*: "If a man is so daring as to publicly declare that the christian religion is a mere cheat, what has his neighbour to do with it? 'Vengeance is mine, saith the lord'—Vengeance is mine,' saith man; which of these two declarations are we to believe? If the first—man is an usurper and a liar. If the second—god is the author of a lie." The same paper speaks of the danger of these prosecutions, and says that "the eyes of millions have been directed to Messrs. Finlay and Robinson, of Edinburgh, and the curiosity of millions has been roused by their trial, to know for what they have been dragged before the highest tribunal in the country. Instead of growing wise by experience, our pseudo religionists still blindly pursue the same stupid policy, and of course at every trial experience the same humiliating defeat." It is therefore the interest of christians to prevent prosecutions for blasphemy, because of their inutility, and it is the duty of the atheist to suppress them, because of their injustice.

All, of every shade of theological opinion, or of no theological opinion at all, who desire to avert the iniquitous interference of the law, and protect the objects of its vengeance, may aid us in a variety of ways. There is none so poor, so unimportant, or so isolated, as to be incapable of assisting the mighty cause of free discussion by his purse, his time, or his personal exertion.

He may become a useful ally in a thousand ways, if he will seriously reflect on the imperative necessity of the co-operation of all liberty-loving and honest men, when so many and such daring attacks are made on our dearest liberties.

He may, among many little services that will occur to him, unprompted—assist by annual, weekly, or other periodical subscriptions.

By donations.

Taking charge of a collecting-book.

Placing subscription-sheets in places of resort.

Collecting funds by penny subscription cards.

Furnishing names and addresses of friends to the cause.

Sending notices or reports of proceedings, etc., to the press.

Transmitting to the secretary favourable, or other, notices from the press.

Acquainting editors of journals with intended meetings, proceedings, etc.

Looking up and furnishing information respecting statute and common, or judge-made law, affecting blasphemy offences.

Noting or procuring for the use of the committee

authentic or official accounts of blasphemy prosecution cases.

Obtaining particulars of persecutions, either of his personal knowledge or well authenticated.

Furnishing names, addresses, and other information concerning secretaries of societies, clubs, lodges, institutions, or associations in general.

Facilitating the intercommunication with sympathisers or co-operators abroad.

Giving, or getting up lectures, essays, tracts, hand-bills, posting-bills, advertisements, public meetings, in furtherance of the cause.

Signing, preparing, sending round, or displaying, in public places, petitions or memorial papers, and getting them presented by the members of parliament in the locality. Such memorials to include not only a remonstrance against ill-treatment of the victims of the law, but earnest appeals for the abrogation of all blasphemy law.

Obtaining a pledge from parliamentary candidates to support such measures in the house.

Distributing the addresses, etc., of the Union.

The committee, which continues to convene public meetings, from time to time, in various localities of the metropolis, would gladly aid in facilitating such objects in the provinces.

G. JACOB HOLYOAKE, Secretary.

Address, 40, Holywell-street, Strand, London.

N.B. The Scottish Trials are expected to commence on Monday next, when means of procuring, at will, legal assistance will be of the first importance. Success or defeat, a valuable acquittal, or a long imprisonment, may hang on a very trifle. Let our friends and collectors think of this, and be unremitting in their endeavours to furnish proper assistance. A crisis in Scottish liberty has been brought about, and it will be a lasting disgrace to let it pass unimproved.

All orders to be made payable, to Mr. Holyoake at the General Post-Office, London.

"A Subscriber to the Anti-Persecution Union" is informed that the reports of public meetings of the "Union" are intended to serve as "addresses." In the limited pages of the *Oracle* it would be impossible to give addresses and reports of public meetings in one week—hence they are varied. This plan seems to have an advantage, for the reports of meetings contain those stirring topics that would appear in an address, besides setting the example to the provinces of holding public meetings.

G. J. H. Sec.

SUBSCRIPTIONS.

For the London Anti-Persecution Union.

Per Mr. Johnson, Collector 15	£0 8 0
Per Mr. Abrams, Collector 1	0 1 0
Sale of Trials	0 2 3
G. J. H., Sec. A.P.U.	

NOTICE.

A. C. The genius of his "Wild and Wicked Youth" so pervades his muse that we must decline his production.

W. M. D. and W. E. both send pieces on the adventure of Jesus with the asses. Poets are sensitive and we must be mild. The subject is hackneyed, and requires a stroke of original wit to set it in a new light.

A. R.'s "Carol" is not sufficiently distinctive from its unfortunate race.

"A Young Man who has been a Supporter of the *Oracle* from its Commencement," is desired to send his address. His letter is very gratifying.

C. J. Savage's "How Should we Act?" has left us in doubt as to "how we should act" with his useful article. A press of matter prevents its immediate insertion, but it shall not be lost sight of. Arrangements are in progress relative to a larger and more comprehensive paper, which will afford proper facilities for these and other important matters.

Koen, Glasgow, sends a "Negro Melody," to the 374

air of Lucy Long. We can only find room for the opening lines:

"If old Jehovah willing
We'll sing de family song,
And play de christo's banjo,
De vigin's got a son.
Oh no man shine like Jesu
Dat Jesu, Mary's son."

"A Constant Reader," Manchester, is thanked, for his candid and well-intentioned hints. Would he favour us with his address? Mr. Holyoake would then write him relative to his proposal. The subject is under careful consideration.

J. H., Glasgow. His two pieces are declined.

J. Smith, Westminster, obliges us with the Hypothesis for the Existence of the Soul Independently of Revelation, by H. Constantine Jennings. It will probably be used. Though it is useless to the atheist. The first proposition, from which all the others flow, is a theistical one, consequently the whole argument is weightless with an atheist.

RECEIVED.—Lines by W. E. "The Misapplication of Speculation," by G. Hammond. "The Cross," by Lucian. And W. D.'s, Bath, requested information, with thanks.

ATHEISM.

M. Q. RYALL will deliver a course of *Three Lectures*, each to be followed by discussion, at the Hall of Science, City Road, near Featherstone-street, the first, on Sunday, October 29, 1843—An inquiry into the GOD-IDEA, its origin, nature, and varieties—type of god-idea in physical phenomena, individual character, or national peculiarities—revealed and "philosophical" gods—progressive notions of deity—Indian, Egyptian, Jewish, christian, mohammedan, and other varieties—tradition and scripture theology—a theometer or god scale.

On Sunday, November 5th—THE GOD-BASIS examined as a foundation of morals. Faith, worship, order of priesthood, churchism and sectarianism, tendency to exclusivism, domination, social inequalities and persecution, discouragement of self-reliance and checks to temporal happiness investigated as influences or sources of action—levitical and other theological ordinances—Christ's and Mohamed's precepts—"spirit of christianity" and forms of christianity—morality of natural theologians.

On Sunday, November 12th—MORALITY WITHOUT GOD. Basis of facts in nature, individual and social man—consequences of rejecting revelation—moral systems of ancient philosophers less discordant and irreconcilable with nature than theologies—code of morals according to Volney, Rousseau, Bentham, Morgan, Combe, and Owen.

Admission at Half-past Six.

LIBRARY OF REASON.

Penny Numbers.

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THE FALLEN STAR; or THE HISTORY OF A FALSE RELIGION.

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I. Superstition. By Plutarchus. With Preface by Wyttenbach.

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IV. The Supposed Necessity of Deceiving the Vulgar. By J. Hibbert.

V. Natural Theology Exposed. By George Ensor.

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Saturday, Nov. 4, 1843.

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First Editor—Charles Southwell, imprisoned for twelve months and fined £100, for Blasphemy in No. 4.
Second Editor—George Jacob Holyoake, imprisoned for six months, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.
Third Editor—Thomas Paterson, imprisoned for one month, for Blasphemous Placards, in London.
Vendors—George Adams, imprisoned for one month for selling No. 25, in Cheltenham; and
Harriet Adams, his wife, arrested for selling No. 4, in the same town.

No. 100.]

EDITED BY WILLIAM CHILTON.

[PRICE 1d.]

THE SCOTCH GOD WAR.

THE TRIALS OF ROBINSON AND PATERSON.

WHILST this number is being printed, or shortly after, Paterson and Robinson will be taking their trials before, it is to be *hoped*, but not to be *expected*, impartial, or, at least, honest, juries, in the High Court of Justiciary. The venerable old infidel, Finlay, I learn both from Southwell and Paterson, is not to be tried—this is good—it would have been well for the Scotch bugaboo-defenders if they had stretched their wisdom a wee bit further, and let Paterson and Robinson alone. They have burnt their fingers rather severely already, but wanting the discretion of children, to avoid what has injured them, they are rushing heedlessly into the fire, and will presently be enveloped, as Shadrac, Meshec, and Abednego are said to have been—if the Scotch louns escape without singeing their whiskers, if they have any, or the hair of their head, if they lack whiskers, why I shall be very much deceived. But why is not Finlay tried? Surely there was sufficient matter in the indictment preferred against him, and which was copied into the *Investigator*, to go before a jury with—it contained long extracts from the "Ecce Homo! or a critical inquiry into the history of Jesus Christ, being a rational analysis of the gospels"—"The Life of David; or the history of the man after god's own heart"—"Aphorisms, opinions, and reflections of Thomas Paine"—"The god of the Jews, or Jehovah unveiled"—"The bible an improper book for youth"—and "The protestant's progress from church of Englandism to infidelity." Not only were the extracts long, but they were exceedingly strong, very spicy indeed—quite choice morsels, regular literary devils, for blasphemy gourmauds—the arguments were trite and well put, and the language anything but mincing and suited for "respectables," even in our own ranks, much less the orthodox in the ranks of our enemies.

Why then has so rich an indictment been abandoned? Has Paterson's courageous defence of the principle of free discussion in

Edinburgh anything to do with it? I think it has, much, if not everything. Paterson's determined opposition to the persecuting spirit evinced by the Edinburgh worthies, brought their conduct into such deserved contempt, that they would gladly have dropped proceedings against Robinson, as well as Finlay, and doubtless would have done so, but that the obscene books unfortunately found in Robinson's shop, enabled them to screen their real motives, and to throw around them a mantle which was certain to excite the disgust and execration of those parties who would shrink from participation in proceedings avowedly instituted to suppress theological opinions. The impression is strong upon me, that Paterson's disinterested and noble sacrifice of self, for the benefit of a cause to which he has declared himself wedded, would have led to the result of which I speak, but for the untoward circumstance mentioned above. I much regret the accident which has thus given freedom's foes an opportunity of wreaking their vengeance upon one of its supporters, without exciting disgust in the minds of honest men—but whilst I regret, I do not blame, Mr. R., the most wary may sometimes be found tripping, and weazles no doubt *do* sleep, though seldom caught at it. The assurance of Mr. Southwell that Mr. Robinson has done all in his power to suppress the sale of obscene works, is sufficient evidence that those found on Mr. Robinson's premises were not there willingly on his part, and it is said that a day or two would have found them in the hands of their owners—virtuous, moral *christians*.

If the Scotchmen want a character of Paterson, let them write to London, to men long and honourably known for their opposition to tyranny and corruption—men who have fought by his side, who know his worth, and who would entrust liberty or life to his keeping with perfect confidence.

The secretary of the London Anti-Persecution Union has put forth such earnest and eloquent appeals to the justice of all honest haters of oppression—calling upon them by all they hold sacred, not to permit the Scottish victims to be sacrificed, through their apathy,

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to a grossly unjust and tyrannical law, sought to be enforced from a bloody spirit of persecution—that it will be sufficient that I reiterate that appeal—the day has come when the battle must be fought, and Freedom demands that every man should do his duty—he who shrinks, he who hesitates injures his cause, assists his foes, and disgraces himself—*be honest! BE JUST! BE GENEROUS!* W. C.

PATERSON AND THE WATERLOO ROOMS ROW.

“ON Tuesday evening, I was apprehended on a warrant for contempt of court, and to answer for disturbing the public meeting in the Waterloo Rooms. I was kept in a dark cell *fourteen* hours, they refusing to take bail, although it was offered to any amount. When brought before the sheriff, yesterday, after ascertaining I was indicted for next week, he adjourned my case till Monday week, on my finding bail.” T. P.

The *Northern Star*, which I am much pleased to perceive has taken more notice of our proceedings than it was wont some short time since, thus speaks of Mr. Jeffery's treatment, as reported in our last number :

“How Mr. Jeffery's attendance resulted, we have seen by the *Scotsman*. That gentleman writes to us that after being confined in a cell for two hours, *with several felons*, he was liberated by Mr. Robert Peddie, the late inmate of Beverley Gaol, becoming his security in the sum required. A word upon this shameless and senseless decision of the Edinburgh sheriff. Shameless, because the parties who should have been bound over to keep the peace, were those who ‘*dragged Mr. Jeffery from the platform* ;’ those who ‘*seized Mr. Paterson by the neck and dragged him through the meeting* ;’ those who ‘*tore the hair from his head, beat him with sticks, and laid his head open*.’ These bloodhounds, calling themselves christians, were the parties who should have been ‘bound over to keep the peace,’ and not Mr. Jeffery, who peaceably heard every other man, and only insisted upon his right to free speech in a public, and what ought to have been, a deliberative assembly.”

PARLIAMENTARY CANT AND SACRED SLANG.

And I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back parts.—*Jew Book*.

TACITUS and Suetonius speak of the pernicious superstitions of the christians, which even in Rome, where everything vile and base met together, affrighted the propriety of these writers. These are better witnesses against christianity than Macaulay in its favour, and against hindooism. While these historians remain to all time, the epheme-

ral reviewer and his testimony just serve the temporary purposes of delusion, and then die away. At the same time that Tacitus and Suetonius wrote, we see in Mosheim (Soames's edition, pp. 56-7) mention made of the slanders against the christians—the basest calumnies, he says, were disseminated against the christians and their religion. This ecclesiastical historian prudently refrains from telling you what they were, they may be learned, he says, from the writers of apologies for christianity in the early ages. In like manner we are to learn the accusations of the Jews against Jesus from the four gospels, where the only evidence given is called false, though stated by the witness just as Jesus had spoken the words. Surely they must have been of a very beastly character, when Mosheim calls them base, and will not mention what they are, though a writer, Kortholt, has published them in three volumes quarto, called “The Pagan Detractor, or the Calumnies of the Gentiles against the Christians,” and in that language (Latin) which veils what is too indecent to be seen by the public. As to the morals of the christians of the first century, Mosheim says (vol. i., p. 97), “Their lives are not to be judged by the precepts and exhortations of their teachers now extant, and those who have written concerning the innocence and holiness of the early christians (he says) may be confuted by the clearest evidence of both testimony and facts.” In the first century arose that sect which we have been speaking of as a pendant to the Hindoos at Somnauth, the gnostics. In the second century they flourished also under the name of marcionites, carpocratians, valentinians, and minor gnostic sects. In the third century, under the title of manicheans. Lord Brougham speaks of them as deserving of attention from being the only christians who were metaphysically and philosophically religious, and that their opinions would have been still more universal, if they had not mixed them up with impure rites. Mosheim says in the fifth century (vol. i., p. 472), “The love-feasts were abolished; because, as piety diminished gradually and continually, these feasts gave to many persons occasions for sin.” Here we have the fact acknowledged, when the christians have it all their own way, that they were obliged to do away with those attractions of the flesh, which in the beginning produced them converts, and were such a scandal to the pagans. We agree with Mosheim, that as piety or religion diminished, some natural sense of morality gained the ascendancy. The reason itself, given by Mosheim, is not the truth, but the reverse, as we have the testimony of Paul to the occasions of sin in the love-feasts, when christian piety came flowing pure and strong

from its source. When Jesus associated with mad women, prostitutes, men's wives, and sinners, we may well suppose there were among such a set more occasions for sin at a love-feast, than when the christians became less pious and more respectable. What the early christians were we may also imagine from the judgments passed upon them by their god himself—the seven churches of Asia Minor were so bad, that one of the apostles sent them to hell, and in fulfilment of the new covenant, promised that they should be swept off from the face of the earth for their sins. The greater the punishment the greater the crimes, therefore we must imagine these were the worst people upon the face of the earth.

However, we have the authority of church historians for supposing that those who abolished the love-feasts were heretics. Though Mosheim approves of this innovation, in every other respect he says the christians were far removed from original christianity. Those called heretics, on the contrary, now no more, who kept up the love feasts with all their indecencies, were, according to Mosheim, Semler, and Soames (see vol. ii. p. 251), in all other points very orthodox. They have been denounced accordingly by Bossuet as protestants, in his book "The Variations of Protestants." They existed up to the ninth century under the name of paulicians, when they died martyrs to the rites of Somnauth. Give up their faith they would not, therefore murder and robbery was legalised in the persons of orthodox christians, putting to death and confiscating the property of the heterodox. One religious woman, the Empress Theodora, took by surprise and massacred a hundred thousand. Those who escaped these persecutions, however, always fought bravely, so that many more thousands perished, and many cities were destroyed in this question of the Somnauth ceremonies. Some lay concealed, others took refuge among the pagans of the north, others joined with the Saracens, and were last among the mohammedans. If all history did not show that christianity and all its rites were borrowed from the east, one would be inclined to suppose, according to the orthodox account of resemblances to christianity in India, that these primitive christians, gnostics, manicheans, valentinians, carpocratians, paulicians, went and established their ceremonies at Somnauth. Those few who remained in Europe, and were content to propagate their faith silently amongst themselves, are not only charged by roman catholics with being the protestants who re-appeared at the reformation, but are accepted by some protestant writers "as witnesses for the truth in their times." Therefore Macaulay belongs to that christianity which most resembles the

hindooism at Somnauth, and he should not vilify his own faith in attacking that of others, where the two in the circle of the world and of events meet and show their common antiquity. I advise him to rest content and not open the question, lest the puseyites show him not only the primitive christianity in the rites of Somnauth, but the real original of our faith and proper worship, in Exodus chap. xxxiii.

Nor did these witnesses to the truth of christianity, as preserved at Somnauth, expire in Europe. Directly there was a spirit of reformation, the gnostics, and the manicheans, and new varieties of these sects re-appeared. The inquisition hunted them out and put them to death, and even reformers, such as the hussites, massacred a large body of them in Bohemia.

Mosheim, in his ecclesiastical history, (Soames's edition, vol. iii., p. 68), gives a chapter upon them. They were marked by just the same characteristics as before, all the present doctrines of the reformation, mixed up with impurities, which made them hateful to reformers themselves. Their opinions, such as that the internal man was not defiled by the deeds of the external, and the practices of some, both sexes meeting in a state of nature, were also accompanied by the greatest ascetism on the part of others. This extraordinary union observed amongst the earliest and the latest of these christians, is borne out by the same intermixture of apparently contradictory opinions and practices among the Hindoos of Mr. Macaulay. While some will practise Somnauth rites, others will suffer the most horrible self-inflicted tortures and privation. Some combine both, as in the case of marriage and death, and a new birth unto life under the wheels of Juggernaut. These several sects, which Mosheim includes under the manichean heresy, were called the adamites, the white brethren, the men of *understanding*, the new flagellants. Whatever they might entitle and think themselves the people of the fifteenth, were something like the Macaulays of the nineteenth, century, and did not *understand* them, and the knowledge of the truth was again lost to the world. This has been the case with Somnauth, it and its rites have passed away, and the worship which Macaulay so piously decries, in order to enhance the value of the unknown term christianity, has become, if it exists at all as before, of rare occurrence in the east. The overthrow of Somnauth was eight hundred years ago, and thus, a long time after that, in the fifteenth century, the same faith still survived in Europe.

That contemporaneous with christianity in all its developments, a Somnauth system of worship has existed, is a fact brought to

light almost at the time Mr. Macaulay was inveighing against Hindoo practices of some hundred years ago. I will extract the whole account, word for word, from "Laing's Notes of a Traveller," p. 226: "The only positively immoral religious sect of the present times, in the christian world, arose, and has spread itself in the most educated part of the most educated country in Europe—in and about Königsberg, the capital of the province of old Prussia. The muckers are a sect who combine lewdness with religion. The name, mucker, is said to be derived from a local or sporting term, indicating the rutting season of hares. The conventicles of this sect are frequented by men and women in a state of nudity; and to excite the animal passion, but to restrain its indulgence, is said to constitute their religious exercise. Many of the highest nobility of the province, and two of the established clergy of the city, besides citizens, artificers, and ladies, old and young, belong to this sect, and two young ladies are stated to have died from the consequences of excessive libidinous excitement. It is no secret association of profligacy, shunning the light. It is a sect, according to the declarations of Von Tappelskirch, and of several persons of consideration in Königsberg, who had been followers of it themselves, existing very extensively under the leadership of the established ministers of the gospel, Ebel and Diestel, of a Count Von Kanitz, of a lady Von S—, and of other noble persons, and of several of the citizen class; and it appears that a great part of the nobility of the province belong to it. The notice of the government was first attracted to its existence by a complaint to the consistory, of a Count Von Fink, who had been a zealous member of the sect, that the minister Ebel, one of the pastors of the city, and who is one of its leaders, had attempted to seduce his wife, under the pretext of procreating a messiah. The consistory appointed two commissioners to examine, and report to government upon this business. The system and theory of this dreadful combination of vice with religion are of course very properly suppressed. All that can be gathered from the Allgemeinen Kirchenzeitung, of 1836, and the historical writings of that year, is that this horrible sect was spread so widely that the official people were themselves slow in the investigation of the matter, and that the countess who had disclosed the practices of the sect was in danger from their fury, and had to be protected by the police—that a very strict hierarchy existed in the sect, that it was divided in three classes, and that the apprenticeship in the first class must be accomplished, before the reception into the second class; and that the strictest trials were required for

being admitted into the third class, of which the members were called by a name of honour—that the doctrine and practice of the muckers were a mixture of mysticism and gnosticism, of fanaticism and lust; and the heroes and heroines who had sustained the trials of their continence, or power over the flesh, were rewarded with the seraphim kiss, with which the most abominable excesses were connected. The government wisely suppressed the examinations and proceedings, although copies of some of the first official reports and depositions had got into circulation among the curious, and the case was transferred from the local courts of the province, to Berlin, for further consideration, in 1837, but nothing since has been made known to the public on the subject. The sect itself appears, by Dr. Bretschneider's account of it, to have been so generally diffused, that he says, 'It cannot be believed that the public functionaries were in ignorance of its existence, but that they were afraid to do their duty from the influence of the many principal people who were involved in it.' (See Dr. Karl Venturini's Neue Historische Schriften, Brunswick, 1839; also Allgemeine Kirchenzeitung, Jahr, 1836, No. 50; also Pragmatische Geschichte unserer Zeit, das Jahr, 1835, Leipsic, 1837; for what is known to the public respecting the muckers.) In his honest indignation he proposes as the only means of extirpating it, that all religious meetings, all conventicles, missionary societies, religious tract societies, and, in short, all pious doings of the public among themselves, should be put down by the state. This remedy is a little too Prussian, dreadful as the enormity is in a civilised country of such a sect having existed in this age. It is only in the history of Otaheite that its parallel can be found." True, if he means a parallel to all the cases of this sort to be found in church history. But what a minor speck in size, time, and atrocity to the vast field of lust cultivated under the auspices of christianity. The theory, too, of this christian belief and practice is just what is wanting to explain to us fully the mysteries of christianity, and show what a complete revelation it is for all the bad purposes of mankind. W. J. B

THEORY OF REGULAR GRADATION.

XLVIII.

THE fundamental principle of all religions is the belief in the existence of an immaterial being, whose attributes are infinite power and wisdom, and sometimes goodness. But all nature cries aloud against this assumption, for the earth is crowded with imperfections and folly—there is no thing perfect, no not

one. Man is the victim of numberless diseases, and the earth is continually convulsed by the jarring elements. Neither animals nor plants are secure from decay, and the merest trifles often produce disease and death. These obstacles to the belief in a wise, powerful, and good god interfere not with the natural theologian or the revelationist—they *will not* see them unless they are pointed out, and when they are forced upon their attention they declare they are necessary, to enable us to appreciate the good which exists, or, that god, in his inscrutable wisdom, has undoubtedly a reason, good and sufficient, for creating such circumstances, or, rather, in their jargon, for permitting sin and death to continue—which reasons, however, his inscrutable wisdom does not see fit to make known to us. This worse than ridiculous—this vilely pernicious teaching, the atheist rejects with contempt and disgust—contempt for those who would enforce such principles, and disgust for principles thus sought to be enforced. But so long as men remain in ignorance such ideas will obtain—not only because the untutored mind finds in them a ready solution of the greatest of all difficulties—but, also, because wherever there is ignorance there is sure to be cunning, turning that ignorance to its own account, and no article in the fraudulent market has sold so rapidly, so generally, and produced such high prices, as the god article. Iron is, *par excellence*, the staple of English manufacture, and has produced, from first to last, an immense, unaccountable amount of wealth—but, in comparison with the profits which have resulted from god-mongery, the profits upon ironmongery are as a grain of sand to a mountain.

When the atheist rejects, as puerile and demoralising, the fables of the goddists, he must show a reason for the faith which is within him, or submit to be calumniated, ridiculed, and to stand alone without sympathy or support. If he disbelieves the statements of priests, it is asked *why*? if he rejects a manufacturer of natural phenomena, he is asked *why*? He should be able to reply—he should have satisfied himself *why* he differs from the majority, and if he has done so, the odds are but he will be able to explain himself to another.

The first query with which a scepticism of god-belief is met, is—how can you account for natural phenomena without a god? The sceptic replies that he does not attempt to explain, or pretend to understand, the causes of recognised effects. But, persists the theist, if you reject the solution of the difficulty which I offer you, and which to me appears reasonable and conclusive, you have, doubtless, some motive for it—give me the reasons for your contrary belief that I may test their value, and become of your opinion if I find

them better than my own. Although you frankly declare that you do not attempt to explain, or solve final causes—you surely do not sit apathetically down, an indifferent spectator of passing events, never caring to think about the hidden springs which produce such regular and perpetual motion. Things exist. Supposing you can never *demonstrate* why they exist—can you prevent your brain endeavouring to frame a reasonable hypothesis for their existence? Where there is mystery there is always curiosity—though men know they cannot solve the universe, still will they endeavour to satisfy themselves for its existence. Men may *talk* of the pivot of doubt, but it is a phantom, a self-delusion, a weakness of which honest men should be ashamed. Men may believe without being bigotted—those who are guided by reason have nothing to fear from embracing error, 'tis only necessary that they see their folly to relinquish it. To me god-belief appears reasonable, and by it I explain *all* difficulties—how do you *attempt*, without a god, to account for what you cannot understand?

This would be my language were I a theist, and I should be disappointed if the atheist replied that he only knew that things did exist, but why they existed as they did rather than in any other form, he cared not to inquire, because he was certain he should never succeed in solving the enigma. Men must have reasons for the faith which is within them—they may frequently be bad reasons, but they are, nevertheless, *the* reasons of the holders, and if you require them to be surrendered you must offer better ones in their place. The believer in a god will not give up his belief for the barren satisfaction of knowing that all is a mystery, which can never be explained—for he can, with his god, explain it to his own satisfaction—and that is far preferable to doubt and uncertainty, if a man could endure in such a state, but he cannot—and failing reasons in materialism, or atheism, which will relieve his mind, he relapses into theism, and rests satisfied.

Many theists believe in the eternity of matter, but contend for a god as necessary to fashion it into the infinite variety of shapes and conditions observable around us. The properties of matter, they say, are not sufficient alone to produce the phenomena of animal and vegetable life—it requires intelligence to produce life and to perpetuate it, and this intelligence is god. This, though a mere assumption, must be met, and an attempt made to show that the interference of a superior being is quite unnecessary, a work of supererogation—for an attentive examination of natural phenomena satisfies the reasonable man that matter is not only all that exists, but that it is all-sufficient to produce the varied phenomena observable in the universe.

From these remarks will be seen the importance which attaches to the Theory of Regular Gradation, or the Transmutation of Species—it attacks theism in its strong hold, refutes its favourite arguments, and satisfies its greatest scruples. If atheists can show that matter may make a man, reasonable, or honest, theists will waive all other objections to materialism. The object of this series of articles, as before stated, was to show the reasonableness of the belief that matter *can* make men and women, and every other natural phenomena—unassisted, undirected, and uncontrolled. If success has attended my efforts, it is more than I expect, seeing the disconnected and imperfect manner in which I have performed my work. I may, however, say, that considering the restricted sources from whence I gathered my information, and the very limited time I have been able to devote to the subject, I have made the best job I could—and imperfect must be excused.

W. C.

DISCUSSION ON THE QUESTION “IS BELIEF IN A DEITY OF ANY KIND MORALLY BENE- FICIAL,” AT BRANCH A 1.

Third Night.

MR. BEST, in resuming the debate, apologised for the insufficiency of his education, but, to the best of his ability, he would guard the unwary against the moral poison disseminated by atheists, whose reason he considered to be as much perverted as was that of mad Tom of Canterbury—gave them credit for sincerity, but when he heard them laud the maggot as an object of their adoration, and call the lord Jesus an evil-minded person, he was justified in believing their reason perverted. With regard to the design argument, he thought that the troublesome vermin consequent upon uncleanness, an evidence of fore-intended punishment and disgrace—contended for the necessity of hope and fear as essential helps to morality. As to the objection of the atheist, that a belief in another world tends to the neglect of this, such is not what christianity requires—he would read from the new testament the passage so frequently alluded to, “Set your affections on things above, and not upon the things of the earth”—by this he understood St. Paul to mean the cultivation of the intellect and of morality, and avoidance of lewdness, hypocrisy, lying, etc., as things of the earth.

MR. KEMP differed from the last speaker in respect to the meaning of St Paul's precept. If the explanation of Mr. B. be correct, then was St. Paul wrong—inasmuch as morality and intellectual refinements are as much things of the earth as their opposites—looked upon god-belief and crime as

parent and child, and referred to Robespierre, a god-believer, and at the same time one of the bloodiest tyrants it has been the world's misfortune to see—signing away the lives of a hundred and fifty fellow-creatures one evening, and next morning heading a procession in honour of a supreme being—thought Robespierre most unworthy the character given him on a former evening, by Mr. Holyoake. Were the idea of the christian's god for a moment admissible, he (Mr. K.) would, at the day of judgment, be disposed to tell the dispenser of reward or punishment he was acting most irrationally, most absurdly. The follies of mad Tom were a consequence of god-belief.

MR. SNELL admitted considerable talent on the side of the atheist, and agreed with them, that many of the deity's attributes were degrading and debasing—was as great an enemy to priestcraft as any one, but believed that were the idea of a god entirely destroyed, priestcraft would still exist where ignorance of nature obtained. In some parts of Africa they have no idea of god, but priests and conjurors are there to bring rain, or fair weather, and are well paid for so doing. To the objection that the belief in a future world leads to a neglect of this, he would say, that the injunction love god and your neighbour, made not two separate interests to be attended to, but while doing one you were necessarily doing the other. It had been said that a belief in the governance of god would stop inquiry into physical phenomena—not so, our greatest philosophers were believers, and at the same time pushed their investigations to the utmost possible limits.

Some interruption here occurred, which ended in the forcible ejection of some three or four disturbers—after which,

MR. SAVAGE junior, came forward, and referred to the cases of Galileo and Lawrence, as exemplifications of hypocrisy resulting from god-belief. Buckland, the writer of a Bridgwater Treatise, had subsequently disavowed the paternity of some passages therein, favouring materialism. The felicity of a belief in meeting in a future world, counteracted by the enhanced fear of eternal separation, as in the case of Lazarus and Dives—thought that as there were so many true religions, 'twere better, instead of only believing in one, to believe in all, and thereby not throw a chance away. Would show from the scriptures themselves, had he time, the utter impossibility of a christian being moral—spoke of their treatment of Carile, and concluded by a powerful appeal in support of the Man Paterson, calling on them to rescue him from the fangs of his christian persecutors. (Responded to by hearty and long continued applause.)

MR. PUDDFORD now made his appear-

ance, but unfortunately only to divert the audience with his extravagances of speech and gesture. He, however, essayed to show christianity was the source of all good—it had reclaimed America from hordes of wild beasts and wilder men, tribe after tribe had been destroyed as fast as they appeared, and at length it has become the peaceful abode of a nation of christians.

At this moment the audience were convulsed with laughter, the speaker endeavoured in vain to o'ertop the accumulating din—the chairman interposed to obtain order, but Mr. P. rejected with disdain the proffered aid—filled with christian zeal, his anti-socialist bile rushed forth in torrents upon his devoted auditory—he anathematised the *New Moral World* as crawling, serpent-like, warily into the public mind—still unrestrained, his wrath waxed hot against its members, hurling his firebrands of invective and abuse (christian charity and goodwill, in their most insinuating forms) unsparingly about—he charged the social body with employing duplicity to fill its ranks, opening their halls for the ostensible purpose of free discussion, but with the design of robbing the young of their religious faith, and adding numbers to infidelity, adding that, for candour and openness of purpose, they were inferior to the atheists. (long reiterated applause, which was, however, not allowed to subside until Mr. P. retired, which he at length did most ungraciously, full of pious rage against the *New Moral World*).

Mr. CLARKE, the chairman, rose and repudiated the charge laid to the socialists, of speciously alluring the young to these discussions—they addressed themselves more to the adult than to the youth, more to the matured reason than to the religious feeling. For impartiality in the discharge of the onerous duties of chairman, he would yield to no one—that Mr. Puddeford was the only christian advocate attending these discussions, no fault of socialists, who treated all with like courtesy. He (Mr. C.) considered it a duty he owed to himself and the body to which he belonged, to demand an apology from Mr. P., otherwise he should call for an expression of opinion on the part of the meeting, as to whether he Mr. P. should be allowed to speak at any of their future meetings, unless upon a promise of good behaviour.

A show of hands was called for, when all seemed of opinion that Mr. P. did not know what public decency required of public men.

Mr. PUDDEFORD again rose, and complained that he had not been fairly dealt with by the *New Moral World*, in being tried and condemned without being called on for his defence, and continued to inveigh against the

New Moral World and its treatment of himself and brother christians at other places.

Mr. RYALL adjourned the inquiry.

If Mr. Puddeford be desirous of shining as an orator, let him stand upon the shore and declaim to the winds careering over the Thames, at Battersea. If he be desirous of exhibiting to the world the strange vagaries of the internal spirit, let him emigrate to America, he will there find camp-meetings enough for his purpose. If he be emulous of his lord Jesus—let him follow the example of his lord, and with a knotted scourge seek the money-changers in our temples of commerce, that is, places of worship—or send a brother in search of a donkey, saying Puddeford hath need of him, but let him not hope to bring down a John-street audience to his own intellectual level—let him not expect to cram his stale trash down the throats of even John-street children, they'll none of it, and if he were not possessed of the true characteristic impudence of a christian advocate, he would long ago have shrunk abashed into obscurity, nor continue to have obtruded his crude imaginings on men who set a value on their time. Let us hope when next we report Mr. Puddeford to find that he has mended his manners.

CHARLES DENT.

[FROM GOETHE.]

THE SUPREME—THE HEAVENLY HOST.

To them *Mephistophiles*.

(The three archangels advance, contemplating the universe.)

Raphael.—The sun, in soft accord, as wont of old, Joins in proud rivalry his brother spheres:

And all their fore-ordain'd journey hold,
Closing in thunder-sounds their circuit years!

The glorious sight ennerves the angelic soul—
Yet none may fathom the display

Incomprehensible!—the wondrous WHOLE
Sparkles, as on creation's day.

Gabriel.—Rapid—immeasurably quick
The earth-pomp whirls and circles round,
Changing its bright light—beatific!

For shudderings, and night profound.

In foaming tides, the broad seas roam,
Dashing their surges 'gainst the rocks' foundations,
And dragged are rocks, and seas, and foam,
For ever on, in swift rotations.

Michael.—And storms in opposition raging
From seas o'er land—from land o'er ocean,

In conflict mad engaging,
Build deep-laid barriers by their motion.

Now the destroying lightning's vivid flame
Foreruns the awful thunder's roar—

Yet, lord! thy messengers proclaim thy name,
And the calm tenure of "thy day" adore.

The Three Archangels.—The glorious sight ennerves the angelic soul—

Yet none may fathom the display
Incomprehensible!—the wondrous whole
Sparkles, as on creation's day.

Mephistophiles.—Since thou, O lord, hast once again drawn near,

And askest how terrene affairs have been:

And as thou'rt wont to be well-pleased when I appear,

So now amongst thy servants I am seen.

Pardon my simple tongue—too blunt for guile—

Can't coin high words! Thy menials, sire, may mock!

But pathos from me would only make thee smile,
And since thou'st ceased to laugh, th' attempt might shock!

About the sun and worlds—I've no report to give,
I only scan how grumblingly men live!
The little god o' th' earth, however keeps his caste,
And is to-day as whimmy as o' th' past;
He, perhaps, a trifle better might have thriven,
Hadst thou not given him that seeming light of heaven,

Which he calls reason—but, beyond dispute,
It makes him far more beastly than the brute.
He seems to me, with th' high permission of your grace,

To be much in the long-legged cricket's case—
Which ever flickering flies, and flying hops,
And then—to grind its "old tune"—into grass it drops.

'Twere better from the grass he never rose—
In every filth he plunges now his nose!

The Supreme.—Has thou to me then nothing more to say?

Dost come eternally complaints to lay?
Nothing seems right on earth with thee; for ever sad.

Mephistophiles.—My lord, I find things there, as heretofore, confounded bad!

Men are so wretched with your way to please them,
That I can scarcely find it in my heart to tease 'em.

The Supreme.—Dost thou know Faust?

Mephistophiles.—The doctor?

The Supreme.—My servant.

Mephistophiles.—To be sure I do! He serves thee in strange guise, I think.

Not earthish is the numskull's meat and drink:
His fermentations drive him phantom joys to chase—
And half aware too is he that his head's possess'd!
From heaven he would the brightest stars displace,
And from the earth the choicest pleasures wrest;
But all that's near, and all that moves in space,
Contents not his deep-working haughty breast.

The Supreme.—Though now he serves me with entangled means,

He soon a clearer light shall know.

Kens not the gardner when the sapling greens,
That bloom and fruit next year will show?

Mephistophiles.—What is the bet? You'll lose him too,

If I permission have from you

By pleasing steps to lead him—my own way.

The Supreme.—So long as earth-beclogged is his condition,

So long I do not say thee, nay.

Man's prone to err in acquisition.

Mephistophiles.—Thou hast my thanks—for with cold clay

I never willingly did come in contact—

'Tis with the plump red-cheeked ones I have tact.

A corpse is far beyond my tutelary care,

Mine is a "cat and live mouse" affair.

The Supreme.—Well! be he committed to thy management,

Entice his spirit from its fountain-head,

And lead it (hast thou the power to circumvent)

With thee—thy downward path to tread—

But stand abashed when failure thou must own:

To a good man, even in his darkest tribulation,

The righteous path is not unknown!

Mephistophiles.—Enough—if thou delay not thee probation,

I shall not quake for my human speculation!

Have I success, which doubtless will ensue,

You'll grant me a triumphant chaunt?

Dust shall the doctor chump, and lose it too,

Like to the far-famed serpent, my maternal aunt.

The Supreme.—Even thou may'st then appear without a lower—

'Gainst such as thee I have no loathing hate.

Of all the spirits that denied my power,

The wag's the one I lightest execrate.

(To the heavenly host.)

As man's activity is prone to doze, you know,
(He being all too fond of unconditional ease)
I willingly have given him one to tempt and tease,
Who, being devil, provides, and keeps him on the go.

But you, ye sons of god! of purest soul,
Delight ye in this moving beauteous whole—

The crescentive! that ever lived and wrought,
Embrace ye with the hallowed bands of love.

And such appearances as wavering seem to move

Them, make ye firm with everlasting thought.

(The heavens close—the angels separate.)

Mephistophiles.—From time to time I see the ancient lord

Most willingly—and hard to give offence.

(To the pit.)

'Tis vastly flattering, on my word,
For devil to contab with omnipotence.

[IN the early translations of Goethe's "Faust" this opening scene was omitted, as too blasphemous. Nevertheless the poem could not be understood without it. It shows the devil in his true colours, that he does not wish to ensnare us, but god is always jeopardising our souls, our good or ill being mere gambling transactions between him and Satan. "Our father which art in heaven," being a sort of slave-dealer, makes our purchase or our sale a game of chance, these demoralising practises not even having the excuse of being the means of gaining an honest livelihood. Thus were our first parents and the human race disposed of with the same levity with which they were made. Both father and son have proved themselves such extravagant dogs, we must cut the acquaintance. As fast as they are provided with the ready—new coined faithful, fresh from the mint of credulity—they lose them to the devil. In the poem of Goethe, Faust goes the way of all before him, carrying along with him sundry other innocents to perdition. The trinity, as usual, lost in the clouds! Moral evils of physical temptation, win the soul of the doctor. The devil seems on too good terms with god, to have mocked him by the usual methods of victory, and gained his servant by the sins consequent on the revelation of heaven given to man.]

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No. 101.]

EDITED BY WILLIAM CHILTON.

[PRICE 1d.]

**BUFFOONERY—POLITICAL AND
RELIGIOUS.**

It will not be denied that, read without the spectacles of faith, there is something ridiculous in the transactions of the life of Jesus. Even he could repose the whole history of his church upon a pun. It being well-known that *petros*, the Greek name for Peter, means rock. As if O’Connell were to say of Captain Rock, upon Rock I will build repeal. There is a littleness in the miracles of Jesus, which compared with some of those of Moses, certainly pass from the sublime to the ridiculous. The water turned into wine—walking upon the sea—the storm upon a lake—the few loaves and fishes, and the crumbs becoming more—even the individual cures—his body anointed for the sepulchre by Mary Magdalene—his rout out of the dealers—and, worst of all, that inexplicable passage which makes Jesus ride on two donkeys into Jerusalem. If it be true, as Strauss says, that they are imitations of past events in the old testament, they are certainly very minature representations, and would make us as much pity as laugh at the rustic grossness of the conceptions which inspired such an extraordinary revelation.

Hutten, one of the first German reformers, was stigmatised by Luther as a buffoon. He was a satirist, and dealt his blows on all parties who, in the violence of revolutions, show the ridiculous extremes of opinions, and could he have beaten them into moderation would have been a glorious exception to the rest of his brethren of the pen, who generally only write for the feelings of the solitary wise, and the amusement of the indifferent public. The title of buffoon we think was therefore more applicable to the principal performer, Luther himself, who, in his style of writing, courted the grossness of the most vulgar buffoonery, and in many of his actions seemed to wish to suit them to the laughter-loving and wondering gaze of an excited populace, rather than the dispassionate criticism of a more discerning public. He was a great actor, and resorted to some miserable clap-traps to astonish the groundlings. His example was soon followed, and produced the school of Carlostadt, Herman

Shapræda, Rothman, John de Mathieson, and John of Leyden. They outdid their master, and Luther, who feared not to progress when he was the first, was afraid he had gone too far when he was distanced in the race. Luther it was who originated the sensual interpretation of theology, instead of the more material moral of the roman catholic. We are told he was possessed by his own mental phantasmagoria and wished to impose it upon others, no man in his writings is more lavish of this pictorial effect, the allegorical entrance and after action of stage pantomime. He averred that the then religion was too spiritual and refined, and he wished to introduce it under childish imagery, which in other hands soon became metamorphosed into bloody play. This literary taste went all in the same direction, he declared except the bible, he knew no better book than Æsop—from the one he gained all his mental, moral, and worldly, from the other his divine, wisdom.

It may here be observed in favour of all established religions, how much purer they are from extravagances, than new dispensations, reformations, and a love of change. The principle of the Jewish religion which it avowed on entering Canaan, was one which it soon renounced the practice of, when it became settled in the enemy’s country. We do not see the milder policy of David and Solomon—in the prime of Jerusalem’s glory, when its kings were made after god’s own soul—was less favoured than the bloody one of the Jewish invaders. The religion of the sword is always urged against mohammedanism, but the charges are not very heavy and well authenticated against them of cruelty. When the Arabs went forth to found a kingdom, and afterwards by the concurrent testimony of impartial historians, when they came in contact with christians, the behaviour of the latter was much worse than that of the former. The Greek idolatry was much more refined than the Roman, which we refer to the much greater consistency of their faith compared to the lust of novelty, so scandalous in the city of Rome. The latter, when too late, wished to bring back paganism to what they protested were its original principles, a sys-

tem refined by Symmachus, Porphyrius, etc., but which adaptation to christianity could not run beside the original itself. In the early ages of christianity there were excesses committed which Gibbon has laid hold of as matter of accusation, and which christians themselves do not defend, but which comparatively passed away when religion became a consolidated whole. When religion revived in the reformation, it passed through the same slough—Erasmus and Bossuet were much more seemly characters and conducted the dispute in a more becoming manner than Luther and his coadjutors, who in reinstating the christian religion also introduced all its primitive convulsions. We may clearly see how this is the march of the human mind, when to day those descendants of Luther and the German reformers, have brought religion to the converse of the reformation, and in the excess of these spiritual refinements are par excellence called the transcendentalists. Pantomime and buffoonery had it all to themselves in early revolutions, and we may say did as much or more than the press in modern and more recent times. The revolution in England may be mentioned against our opinion, but our people soon left the press, as in Germany, to rush into pantomimic action, parodying the scripture heroes, Cromwell himself the biggest buffoon of all, whose pantomime regularly outwitted the rest, and who played a successful part in obtaining political ascendancy, which his brother buffoons of Germany could not effect; during his reign we had the buffoonery of impiety, in the place of religion, and in the succeeding monarchy, to show how every thing ought to be acted, we had the buffoonery of immorality, since which we have proceeded more piano as a government in religion, politics, and morality.

The reign of terror was the most politically-extravagant buffoonery ever seen in the world, and ended, in the spirit of the nation, by a spectacle the most astonishing ever exhibited to the wondering and admiring eyes of France and the rest of Europe—Napoleon became chief performer instead of Cromwell. But though we look with much horror on the tragic buffoonery of the French revolution and the age of burlesqued reason, yet we judge unfairly if we condemn this saturnalia of republican politics more than the many examples of fanaticism and folly; under the guise of religion, and the pretence of hierarchy. We may remark how completely these two revolutions were pantomimic representations. We have before us ludicrous imitations of past histories. If they had not been attended with such direful results, and the drama was real instead of a mere enactment on the stage, we should laugh heartily when we read of Cromwell

and the Praise-God-Barebones Parliament—their ludicrous imitations of the sublime in the scriptures—the Catos, Brutuses, Hermodiuses, Aristogitons, the modern representatives of the Greek and Roman histories, and their quick shifting to Cæsar and Alexander, conquest and universal Roman empire in the persons of Napoleon and his generals. Now it is all past it seems but one of the christmas entertainments of yesterday—we witness and forget, where the mighty of the earth are made the passing pastime of the spectators. In Paris, those who have witnessed *Avant, Pendant et Apres*, know how comic are the associations produced by the political past—the French can find amusement and laughter in their republican follies. But they still reserve for their vanity and love of spectacle the exploits of Napoleon—but we must confess the unhallowed heresy, we have found as much or more to laugh at than admire in seeing an equestrian, horses, and a mob of actors, performing Napoleon, his victories, and stage apotheosis.

We do not see the extent to which we are burlesquing ourselves, except a few perhaps, as Cromwell and Napoleon, who turn it to their own purposes, when we commit ourselves to the violence of agitated times, until the appearance of another so far out Herods Herod and ourselves, that we begin to perceive the ridicule of our own situations. Or in an after period of calm we can admit the folly, and it is shown up in divers ways by our own consent—even in smaller matters we are imperturbable to ridicule when it runs alongside with our present tastes, the fashions always burlesque themselves, soon after they are received; and European civilisation, its vulnerable points, are all, says Miss Martineau, to the advantage of the Americans, palpably displayed in the antic performances of their negroes.

But in contradistinction to the religious and political pictures we have been drawing, where there was such a confusion of sense and nonsense, rationality and lunacy, and in religion heaven and hell ever on earth, divines and devils, we turn with pleasure to the honourable exception of the American revolution—which was accomplished with an absence of all buffoonery—and the revolt of Switzerland under Tell, both which events have remained the permanent triumphs of liberty. But, divested as our manners are, and particularly our religion, from all forms, it is curious how long we have indulged in a spectacular fashion of faith. When a fanatic sets up a new sect, he gives us a pantomimic history of his own inspiration, sundry apparently very unmeaning revelations to the sober-minded, but which seize upon the imagination of the people, and transport them into huntingdonians, shakers,

jumpers, and hearers of unknown tongues. Taking the literal sense of the scriptures, it is certain Paul mentions a form of inspiration delivered in strange cries, but from the general analogy of the past we think it must have been accompanied by some corresponding action. In a crowded audience of Mr. Irving's it was difficult to tell under what bonnet proceeded all the utterance, this shows under what a marvellous loss of physical feature we labour, when a Delphian priestess would have delivered her oracles in a frenzy.

A popular preacher disdains a book, because a great part of his effect lies in his pantomime, which is sometimes more energetic than the action of Italian ballerini, but miserably contracted in its circle without the means and varied appliances of their art. If you listen you will find his discourse to be a series of very vivid and coarse pictures, the very images in speech which the roman catholics give us in colours—he tries to find the saviour in all his sufferings, the audience weep, this is the pathos, then for the sublime, an eternity of hell-fire with devils and all the horrors, the stifled crying becomes shrieking, the women go off into swoons and fits, and many end their lives in a mad-house. This is a description of field-preaching by Mrs. Trollope, in America, but it is no less true of revivals and puritanism in England.

This has a more powerful effect than painting or sculpture, because you are witness in every Italian roman catholic church to this appeal to the senses—a wooden figure of a bloody Christ, depicted with shocking reality, and bodies in hell-fire surrounding you on every side, and devils in every shape handing the victims to their eternal homes—the women do not faint before these figures though a protestant or roman catholic of England turns away in disgust, and I knew a case where one was introduced into a chapel at Dublin, and it was removed after a time as too overpowering for the feelings, and yet the instances with the Italians of religious madness are very rare in comparison with the English. By removing these witnesses of the faith to the eye we have let in much worse idolatry of the soul.

With the reformation down went the images, and with the images down went extempore preaching, which seems universal in all catholic countries; and produced with us an idiotic neglect of action in our pulpit oratory, and transferred its fine workings to the coarse keeping of spiritual demagogues.

W. J. B.

It is my decided and deliberate opinion, from very long and anxious consideration, that the danger is, not of the people learning too much, but knowing too little.—Lord Brougham.

HOW SHOULD WE ACT?

To the Editor of the Oracle of Reason.

SIR.—There is a certain class of persons, calling themselves atheists, who seem very ambitious of being *respectable*, and who refuse to support the *Oracle*, because it does not tell the truth in a “respectable manner.” This class of men also refuse to support or countenance the Anti-Persecution Union, “Because,” say they, “the persons whom the union protects court imprisonment and persecution, and *should therefore be satisfied*.” These “respectable atheists” appear to forget that the influence of bad laws can only be destroyed by a determined opposition, or that the abuse of a good law can only be prevented by a resistance of that abuse. I should be glad to bring some of these “respectables” back to reason, or, failing in that, to point out what I consider the best manner of proceeding with the agitation for religious equality. It is a fact which should never be lost sight of, that the war of atheism is *entirely defensive*—that the atheist himself is, in reality, an outlaw—that if he is known as an atheist, he cannot obtain the protection of any civil or criminal court of *law*, and therefore as the atheist is oppressed and insulted to such an extent, all that he can do will only amount to a defensive warfare. It cannot be expected that all atheists should place themselves in open hostility to the power that is exercised over them, but they can all support those who do come forward to defy the oppressor. It will do very little towards giving the atheist an equality with the religionist to continue to *respect prejudices*—if those prejudices are wrong, the sooner they are shown to be so the better—and, at all events, being prejudices, whether right or wrong, they are not entitled to respect. But why should they require us to respect prejudices, when they have never considered it enough to attack the opinions of their opponents? But, as in the cases of Paine, Carlile, Taylor, Voltaire, and others, every epithet of reproach and calumny has been heaped upon the characters of those opponents, and every *sunday-school teacher* will say, in answer to any difficult question from an infidel, by repeating like a parrot, “Look at the deathbed of that *wretch*, Thomas Paine,” and the very mildest term that would be used in reference to the apostate minister, would be, “that *miscreant* Taylor—” but these are arguments which atheists have never used in answer to christian objections. But my purpose is more immediately to point out a method of agitation. I think we could not do much better than follow the example of the MAN PATERSON, that is, to post blasphemous bills wherever there are bills of any kind posted, this would raise an excite-

ment, which could not, as the "respectables" imagine, be injurious, because it would lead many to think and reason upon the matter who will not do so till they are startled by some public excitement. Another plan is by holding open-air meetings to call the attention of the public to the matter, and wherever there is one of the *genus parson*, engaged in open-air preaching, any other person has the same right to make his stand, the licence to preach giving just as much protection as the preacher possesses without it. I would therefore recommend that wherever any of the genus are engaged—that friend whom the spirit may move should take his stand in opposition. At these meetings, subscriptions might be raised for the A. P. U.

Again, there are unfortunately many persons, who are, by the bad arrangements of society, reduced to a state of destitution, who would sell the *Oracle*, and other periodicals of the same kind in the streets; this might be the cause of increased opposition to the *Oracle*, and of more strenuous exertions to crush it. Let these be frustrated by publishing the *Oracle* by subscription. Your readers will doubtless remember the opposition to the unstamped news some years ago, when the same plan was adopted with success. The man who refuses to assist in some way or other, tacitly declares himself a supporter of the present system, and "he that is not for us, is against us." With these I would recommend a widely different plan of proceeding—and as they are enamoured of the present system, let them see it in its full glory. Let those of them who keep small shops, be proceeded against under the 29th of Charles II., if they open them on Sunday morning—let them be compelled, under the law of Elisabeth, to wear a red woollen cap when they attend church—let the law be put in force against every working-man who goes to church in a dress of greater value than four shillings—and against every person who does not attend some place of worship on Sundays—and then, probably, some of the "respectables" will come to their senses—at present, however, this is certain, that we have no opponents more decided in their opposition, than the "respectable atheists."

I am, sir, yours truly,

CHARLES JOHN SAVAGE.

27, Mape-street, Bethnal Green.

THE PROGRESS OF OUR VIEWS.

To the Editor of the *Oracle of Reason*.

MR. EDITOR.—I was glad to observe in a recent *Oracle* a desire on the part of a correspondent for the formation of an atheistic society—I hope the suggestion will be acted upon, and that speedily—I think the time

most seasonable, and the atheistic elements sufficiently numerous for combination. But two years since, and atheism had scarcely a local habitation. The socialists had a god, but so attenuated as to afford no sustenance for priestcraft, hence the malediction of the clergy—but a heavier blow awaited the craft, in the establishment of the *Oracle*, whose every word threatened to be a raking probe in the black heart of religion, and whose threats have been so far accomplished as to have done more in its day to cripple the monster-curse than have all the efforts of the redoubtable phalanx of deists whose names embellish the page of European history these "sixty years since." Verily the *Oracle* has bettered their instructions—its seeds of atheism have germinated to some purpose, and the clerical vermin of Bristol, Gloucester, London, and Edinburgh—unwitting suicides—have aided in the dissemination of the truth, which will prove to them the bitterest poison. It is true there are men, of otherwise most liberal minds, who still object to the word atheism—who call it a mere negation, a dry, cold, reasoning thing, a hatred of the sublime and beautiful, aiming at nothing but the blighting of human hopes, the withering of human affections, in short, a fell destroyer of everything contributing to human happiness—thus it is human, human, human—as though human and brute atoms were distinct and separate in their essence as the limits of the uncircumscribed universe. Cannot these humans see atheism in the whole animal world, coupled with the fondest affection, the most untiring solicitude? is not the bird an atheist, whose exquisite form and voice, and superb clothing are calculated to create envy in man?—in a word, what do animals possess that man does not covet?—what does man possess that would be an acquisition to any other animal? Man alone is the unhappy brute of the earth—brutalised by his imagination. A world is his for his gratification, yet he insists upon two others, for his torment. It is not enough that he chooses to be slave here, but he insists upon being slave hereafter. What a piece of work is man, and what a piece of work is made about him.—philosophy, however, or real knowledge of things, is at work for him, and spite his every effort, will make him independent of these slavish notions. In some this good work is already effected—the two supreme omnipotences, god and the devil, are sacked, and are sulkily on the tramp together—the world, unfortunately, is at present still before them, where to choose their place of rest. It therefore behoves all whose eyes have been stripped of ghostly cobwebs to aid in the establishment of a society, whose functions shall supersede those of the Anti-Persecution Union, and whose fund

shall be at the service of those who work for and with us, and none others. The new work in contemplation to supersede the *Oracle*, will be a most efficient organ, and small, but regularly-paid, weekly subscriptions, it is hoped will be sufficient to give permanency to the fund, and provide, though never adequately, for the victims.

C. DENT.

REVIEW.

THE PEOPLE'S LIBRARY—*Cain: a Mystery.* By Lord Byron. London: Merri-man and Phillips, 3, Holywell-street, Strand (removing to 51, Barbican).

THIS is a very beautifully-printed edition of Lord Byron's admirable drama. It is a royal 8vo, double columns, with a neat rule border round each page, and is quite equal to any "people's editions" of more orthodox works which have been published by our "respectable" booksellers. I hail the appearance of heterodoxy in such a charming dress with pleasure—it improves the taste of the "workers," produces a longing for a superior order of things, and a hatred for that system which dooms them to toil, and want and squalor—it is a nail in the coffin of priestcraft and godmongery, and "movers" should support such publications as a duty.

I have read *Cain* more than once, but the beauty of this edition has again induced me to go through it—a book well-printed courts perusal, and indifferent arguments and language often have a charm given to them by the aid of typography which they would never have possessed without it. As good tailoring makes a man shapeable, so good printing makes a book readable—both serving as cloaks for natural defects. But where defects are absent, or very trifling, and both the sight and sense are equally gratified, the delighted reader devours, as it were, the ideas of the author, which appear more clear to his comprehension from the type being so to his vision—this is the case with the edition of *Cain* now under review.

There are a number of notes to this edition, which I have not seen in other editions, being the opinions of some of our most talented *literati* upon the work—they add much to the interest and value of the poem. A judicious selection of the extraneous matter generally attaching to valuable books, in the form of notes, appendix, etc. is very serviceable to that portion of the community for whom "people's libraries" and "people's editions" are published, these being the only channels through which they can obtain a knowledge of the sayings and doings of the great in the world of letters. The notes in this edition of *Cain* were new to me, and I should think would be to many others of my

class. Of the poem itself I do not feel competent to express more than a general opinion—the arguments are clear and convincing, and the poetry Byron's. Sir Egerton Brydges says, "The censorious may say what they will, but there are speeches in the mouth of Cain and Adah, especially regarding their child, which nothing in English poetry but the 'wood-notes wild' of Shakspeare ever equalled." "Of Lucifer (says Bishop Heber), as drawn by Lord Byron, we absolutely know no evil: on the contrary, the impression which we receive of him is, from his first introduction, most favourable. He is not only endued with all the beauty, the wisdom, and the unconquerable daring which Milton has assigned him, and which may reasonably be supposed to belong to a spirit of so exalted a nature, but he is represented as unhappy without a crime, and as pitying our unhappiness. Even before he appears, we are prepared (so far as the poet has had skill to prepare us) to sympathise with any spiritual being who is opposed to the government of Jehovah. The conversations, the exhibitions which ensue, are all conducive to the same conclusion, that whatever is is EVIL, and that, had the devil been the creator, he would have made his creatures happier."

A reperusal of *Cain* has induced me to make a couple of short extracts—they follow:

Cain. And this is Life—toil! and wherefore should I toil?—because My father could not keep his place in Eden. What had I done in this?—I was unborn: I sought not to be born; nor love the state To which that birth has brought me. Why did he Yield to the serpent and the woman? or, Yielding, why suffer? What was there in this? The tree was planted, and why not for him? If not, why place him near it, where it grew, The fairest in the centre? They have but One answer to all questions, "'Twas his will, And he is good." How know I that? Because He is all-powerful, must all-good, too, follow? I judge but by the fruits—and they are bitter—Which I must feed on for a fault not mine.

* * * * *

Adah. What is the sin which is not Sin in itself? Can circumstance make sin Or virtue?—if it doth, we are the slaves Of—

Lucifer. Higher things than ye are slaves: and higher Than them or ye would be so, did they not Prefer an independency of torture To the smooth agonies of adulation, In hymns and harpings, and self-seeking prayers, To that which is omnipotent, because It is omnipotent, and not from love, But terror and self-hope.

Just Published—Price Fourpence.

THE QUESTIONS OF ZAPATA; a Spanish Friar, and Professor of Theology in the University of Salamanca. Presented to the Junta of Doctors, 1629. The questions were suppressed, and the author consigned to the stake, at Valladolid, in 1631. Abounding with Extraordinary Illustrations of the word of god. London: Hetherington, 40, Holywell-street, Strand.

SCRAPS.

THE SCEPTICISM OF SHAKSPERE.—In the British Museum there is a copy of a translation of Montaigne's Essays, with Shakspeare's name written in it by himself. Some of the commentators have remarked a similarity between some parts of the "Tempest" and the Essays. Montaigne was considered to be a sceptic in religion. Shakspeare often dwells upon materialism in the most forcible language, and instead of making his heroes look to the consolation of religion, makes them see in death an end of all things. Montaigne says death and earth are evidently the termination of our career. Plutarch, the favourite author of Montaigne, whom Shakspeare is said to have also read, speaks in favour of suicide, and Shakspeare always appears to incline more to it than the contrary. Puritans and catholics he alike ridicules. Though he makes people speak in conformity with their characters, yet abstractedly he never utters his eloquence in favour of religion.

The following is from the last April number of the *Edinburgh Review*, on Puseyism: "Guides! A very moderate course of patristic allegories, conceits, visions, legends, miracles, and superstitions of Barnabas and Hermas, Origen, Tertullian, Jerome, and Ambrose will be quite sufficient to reclaim any *sane* mind from such *abasement*; while, if we were to judge by any spicilegium of their errors, collected out of that *menstruum* of insipidity and commonplace in which they usually float, we should imagine that we had got into the company rather of a set of *Bedlamites* than of christian sages; and should be unable to conceive the reason of that reverence with which they are regarded, except on that principle of the ancient Greeks, which connected *insanity* with *inspiration*; or that which dictated the custom of the mohammedans, to worship and reverence as saints those *who are fairly out of their senses*." Is not this equally true of the books and writers in the old and new Jew-book?

CRUMBS FOR CHRISTIANS.—When a christian looks out of the window of a morning, in London, he sees a living image of his saviour, in the man wot sells asses' milk, riding on a donkey and the foal following. There he goes curing the body, as the man wot rode into town with the same animals gave his own blood as a drink to save the souls of sinners, and made asses of those who swallowed it. The firstling of an ass was, according to the levitical law, to be redeemed with a lamb—but if thou wilt not redeem him then thou shalt break his neck. (Exodus xiii.) This was a prophecy of the mes-

siah, who was such an ass, that, though his first-born, his father would not redeem him with a lamb, but left him to be hung up. In a sermon on the invisible seen in the visible, published by the preacher of the Foundling, the Rev. Mr. Williams, is the following: "The world which we see actually subsists by the shedding of blood—lives on the sacrifice of innocent victims: does not this fact give a colour of assurance to the doctrine that the future well-being of man is interwoven with the offering of his precious blood who was brought as a lamb to the slaughter." This is why christians eat lamb on Easter Sunday. What pleasure they must have in a butcher's shop—and the lord and his worshippers, what a set they make themselves out to be.

LIBERTY AND NECESSITY.—Boswell: "It appears to me, sir, that predestination, or what is equivalent to it, cannot be avoided, if we hold an universal prescience in the deity." Johnson: "Why, sir, does not god every day see things going on without preventing them?" Boswell: "True, sir, but if a thing be *certainly* foreseen, it must be fixed, and cannot happen otherwise; and if we apply this consideration to the human mind, there is no free will, nor do I see how prayer can be of any avail." He mentioned Dr. Clarke, and Bishop Bramhall on Liberty and Necessity, and bid me read South's Sermons on Prayer, but avoided the question which has excruciated philosophers and divines beyond any other. I did not press it further, when I perceived that he was displeased, and shrunk from any abridgment of an attribute usually ascribed to the divinity, however irreconcilable in its full extent with the grand system of moral government. His supposed orthodoxy here cramped the vigorous powers of his understanding. He was confined by a chain, which early imagination and long habit made him think massy and strong, but which, had he ventured to try, he could at once have snapt asunder.—*From Boswell's Life of Johnson.*

MORAL PHYSIOLOGY.—Sir Francis published, in 1837, a pamphlet, "Inquiry into the avowed or secret causes of the small proportion of births at Montreux, in Switzerland." The postponement of the marriages to a later age, and also the fewer births in families, Sir Francis ascribes to a moral restraint acted upon by the population of this parish, both before marriage, and also after they have entered into the marriage state—a restraint, it seems, which their untutored good sense leads them to exert; and entirely conformable to the moral restraint inculcated by Malthus and Dr. Chalmers.—*Laing's Notes of a Traveller.*

On December 16, 1843, price *Threehalfpence*,

NO. I. OF

THE MOVEMENT;
AND
ANTI-PERSECUTION GAZETTE.

Maximize Morals, minimize Religion.—BENTHAM.

EDITED BY G. JACOB HOLYOAKE.

ASSISTED BY M. Q. RYALL.

THE world is progressive, and the MOVEMENT is one of its phases. 'The dragons' teeth sown by the wrong and oppression of past generations, are springing up in this—armed men. Mere customs are disregarded, creeds are questioned, and prejudices blown aside—the murmur of many voices is gathering, and the MOVEMENT comes to swell the cry—for justice, utility, and truth.

Theology will first engage the attention of the MOVEMENT. Supernaturalism of every shade will be fearlessly examined, with a view to destroy its pernicious influences on the destinies of mankind.

The MOVEMENT will be emphatically a paper of this world—subscribing to the golden words of Milton—

To know
That which before us lies in daily life,
Is the prime wisdom.

The MOVEMENT will be plain and practical, earnest and uncompromising. It will always be candid—no man will be in doubt as to what it means, or which side it takes. It will scorn all subterfuge and equivocation, and when authority forces it from this high position, like the Romans of old, the MOVEMENT, of its own accord, will cease to live.

The MOVEMENT's style will be dictated by its conception—rugged or smooth, just as its subjects are so. When it speaks of the beautiful and true, it will woo all golden words and alluring phrases, but when it wars with jesuitry and injustice, its sentences will be as sharp and as jagged as hate.

The Anti-persecution Unions of England and Scotland, are the only bodies who claim the unrestricted right of publishing theological opinions. The MOVEMENT will be their organ, and in its pages their claim will be explained and defended, and the voice of the persecuted will be heard.

The MOVEMENT will utterly disclaim that false and misplaced sympathy which can make excuses for the brutal oppressor, and withhold the balm of consolation from the prostrate victim. Mere adversaries in opinion will be treated with all possible urbanity, but they who interfere with freedom of expression will be shown no quarter.

In *Philosophy*, materialism will be advanced as the only sound basis of a rational

superstructure of thought and practice. In *Politics*, republican principles will be asserted and justified, and the question of *rights* contested on the ground laid down by political philosophers. In *Morals*, self-reform will be earnestly inculcated, on the principle that a wise, virtuous, and happy community, can only be composed of wise, virtuous, and happy individuals.

A *Record*, will be presented of the struggle between young liberty and old oppression, at home and abroad, with a view to the direct advancement of what may emphatically be termed the "movement." Also *Reviews* of such important works as relate to the vital objects of the paper. An *Exposition* of various novel systems of opinion will be drawn from the most authentic sources, and, where practicable, it will be done by the acknowledged leaders of the parties represented.

Another feature will be the *Discussion*, by competent debaters, of forbidden points in theology, the elucidation of which is necessary for the promotion of correct thought and just action.

Education, *Science*, and the *Arts* will receive a due share of attention—that their improving and refining influence may ever polish manners and adorn liberal opinions.

It has been said by Judge Haliburton, that in England "Talk has a pair of stays, and is laced up tight and stiff." The MOVEMENT will not emulate such literary coxcombism. Utility and vivacity should go hand-in-hand. Tongue and thought should both be free.

The MOVEMENT will be a Weekly Journal, Eight pages 8vo. of closely-printed matter, in double columns.

London: Hetherington, 40, Holywell-street, Strand.

SALFORD.—The indefatigable collector of the Anti-Persecution Union, Mr. George Smith, writes Mr. Holyoake thus: "We shall succeed despite the cold, phlegmatic, pseudo infidels, who screen their pockets by exclaiming, 'Oh I can't approve such rashness.' In one or two cases I have not let this subterfuge serve—I have picked their *little souls* and got their mite, by telling them that only through the unconquerable zeal of such men as the union protected that they were permitted to drag on their puny existence as socialists, and were saved from the fang of the god-worshipper. We are getting a 1000 of your addresses printed for to-morrow night." A public meeting is about to be held in Manchester—Mrs. Martin in the chair—on behalf of the Anti-Persecution Union, the managers having granted the use of the Hall of Science for that purpose. We suppose that this is the "morrow night" to which Mr. Smith alludes.—ED. OF O.

THE SCOTCH GOD WAR.

THE TRIALS OF ROBINSON AND PATERSON.

I HAVE only time this week to notice the result of the trials of Messrs. Paterson and Robertson. Paterson was first tried, on Wednesday, Nov. 8. The trial and defence occupied the court from half-past one to seven, when the Lord Chief Justice summed up, and the jury, after deliberating for three quarters of an hour, announced that the charges were declared to be proven by a large majority. The sentence was deferred until the next day, when Robinson was tried, who pleaded guilty to the first and second charges, with the exception of one of the books libelled. His lordship then called Paterson up for judgment, and sentenced him to *fifteen months'* imprisonment, and afterwards sentenced Robinson to *twelve months'* imprisonment, stating that his plea of guilty availed him nothing. I hope the Edinburgh friends will forward all the information in their possession, that proper publicity might be given to these last cases of christian villany.—Ed.

FATE OF PATERSON.

PERISH the very name of god! If Voltaire ever did say *crush* such a fiction, I will endorse the saying henceforth and for ever. I have just read in an Edinburgh paper the sentence of the Lord Justice Clerk on Paterson, and to me it seems not only brutal in substance but vindictive in form. How Paterson must rejoice that he has laboured so well to destroy the cause of piety, which engenders such malignancy. When Hannibal swore eternal enmity against Rome, he had not half the cause to do it that every lover of justice has to swear eternal enmity against religion. For every hour that Paterson suffers a felon's fate shall I think it my sternest duty to "heap coals of living fire" on the bald and villanous head of orthodoxy.

I announced his fate last night at the Rotunda, and received immediate subscriptions for his support in prison. May this example every where be followed.

G. J. H.

LIBRARY OF REASON.

NOW READY.

THE FALLEN STAR; or THE HISTORY OF A FALSE RELIGION.

By Sir E. L. Bulwer.

Received by Mr. Paterson.

From Kate and female friends at Hoxton	£0	3	6
From Beelzebub and Legion, do.	0	4	0
From his friend W. J.	0	2	6

390

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For the London Anti-Persecution Union.

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Per Mrs. E. H. Martin.

Collection at Public Meeting, Hall of Science, Manchester	3	10	0
Mr. J. Smith, Stepney, third sub.	0	1	0

G. J. H., Sec.

ERRATUM—In list of subscriptions for A. P. U. last week, for collector 17, Bristol, 15s. 4d., read 15s. 11d.

NOTICE.

The "Song for Easter Sunday," Liverpool, is declined. Our correspondents will think we have grown poetically fastidious, but the truth is that it is out of kindness to them that some pieces are rejected.

The lines by W. E. declined.

G. Hammond—accepted: Let him try to excel this effort. He is capable of improvement.

Lucian's "Cross" is rather at cross-purposes with our designs. He must think that nothing will frighten us. His piece begins with the following verse. The quotation in the first line is from Kirke White's poem, entitled "The Christiad:"

"I sing the cross," the bloody cross,

On which the demon Jesus hung;

Let far and wide, its horrors dire,

Be known, its hellish mischiefs sung."

ERRATUM—For "cloud clapt," in the last communication from Diagoras Atheos, and in the first article in no 97, read "cloud cap't."

The Editor returns his thanks to Mr. Gillespie, for his kindness in sending him a copy of his pamphlet, "The Argument, a priori, for the being and Attributes of a great first cause," and assures Mr. G. he will read it with attention, and "master the contents"—if he can.

G. Dent's report of the John-street discussion sent too late.

Printed and Published by WILLIAM CHILTON,
No. 40 Holywell-street, Strand, London.

Saturday, Nov. 18, 1843.

THE ORACLE OF REASON:

Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

“FAITH’S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE.”

First Editor—Charles Southwell, imprisoned for twelve months and fined £100, for Blasphemy in No. 4.
Second Editor—George Jacob Holyoake, imprisoned for six months, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.
Third Editor—Thomas Paterson, imprisoned for one month, for Blasphemous Placards, in London.
Vendors—George Adams, imprisoned for one month for selling No. 25, in Cheltenham; and Harriet Adams, his wife, arrested for selling No. 4, in the same town.

No. 102.] EDITED BY WILLIAM CHILTON.

[PRICE 1d.]

THE SCOTCH GOD WAR.

THE TRIALS OF ROBINSON AND PATERSON.

To the Editor of the Oracle of Reason.

DEAR SIR.—Wednesday, the eighth of November, 1843, will long be remembered in Scotland—as, on that day, an individual had the moral hardihood to avow, and *justify*, on the floor of its High Court of Justiciary, his *disbelief in a god*. Need I add, that that individual was Thomas Paterson—“*The Man Paterson versus God*”—as the *Witness originally* designates him. He undauntedly passed the most fearful of Rubicons, and, if the friends of freedom do not at once bestir themselves, will suffer a worse fate than Cæsar’s. There is a *killing-by-inches-practice* that prevails in some Scotch, as well as English, prisons, that can only be put an end to by united and vigorous exertion. The *Edinburgh Courant* announces that Paterson and Robinson, *with shaven heads, are set to break stones*, which is probable enough, as, when Paterson wished to know whether in his imprisonment he was to be treated as a common felon, the Lord Justice Clerk said, in a tone worthy of the occasion, the court had no power to control the arrangements of the prison, which lay with the General Board of Directors of Prisons, of whom he (the Lord Justice Clerk) was one—adding, that any request he (Paterson) had to make, must be made to them—but he might rest assured there was not the least chance that any request, such as that alluded to by him, would be successful. So it is plainly the intention of this bitter lord justice and his co-christians, to have sacrifice, *not* mercy—this, I repeat, is their obvious intention, which all will allow, if a good one, is well fitted to piece up hell’s pavement. I am extremely sceptical as to either of the *criminals* coming out alive. Robinson’s general health is deplorable, and if for no other reason, he is unfit to occupy the post of danger. Indeed, I shall be much surprised if the twelve months’ imprisonment awarded to him, do not break up his already shattered constitution. Paterson’s fifteen

months’ imprisonment *may* not do him serious mischief. What I fear is, that he will be goaded by his tormentors into acts of insubordination, the consequences of which will be terrible only to himself. While in Tothill Fields prison, he suffered a martyrdom more, much more severe, during the one month he tenanted that infernal den, than I did during my thirteen months’ imprisonment at Bristol. He is sadly deficient in that kind of tact (often exceedingly useful) which enables some men to shape to their own purposes, even those who are placed in authority over them. There is nothing conciliatory in his manner, nothing calculated to win upon, or inspire with respect those enemies with whom he will now be almost perpetually in contact. Those who know Paterson intimately, may say of him as Goldsmith did of Johnson, “he has nothing of the bear but his skin”—his gaolers, however, neither know, nor care to know him, and I am persuaded that his repulsiveness will have a very unfavourable influence upon his own condition. Kicking against pricks is not wise, and for my own part, were hell not a fable, and I doomed to companionship with its devilish tenants, it would be my study to be on the best possible terms with them. Paterson is quite sensible that his unconciliatory demeanour is an immense drawback upon him—and more than once has intimated to me his intention to soften, by habit, that harshness of conduct which, by habit, had become, as it were, natural to him—and I was much gratified to observe how manfully he struggled, on the day of trial, to subdue his temper to the level of good sense. There was resolute purpose about everything he said and did, but, at the same time, a comparative gentleness and repose, which told greatly in his favour. To my certain knowledge, many who went into court, writhing under feelings generated by personal pique, went away forgetful of all, save the coolness, fortitude, and temper he displayed. Such miserable scribes as he of the *Courant*, may sneer at his want of “genteel education,” and insinuate that he was unable to read, without great difficulty, his own defence, “though it was written in

a large hand," but they cannot accuse him of betraying a principle, through fear of punishment—nor say that *he* stood abashed before his judges, fearing to repeat in their presence what he had so often declared elsewhere. Robinson, I regret, being compelled to write, has done these things. He has been betrayed into the betrayal of a principle. He *did* stand abashed before his judges, not daring to declare before their faces, what he so often volunteered behind their backs. But he is far more sinned against than sinning. Weak in intellect, as well as body, he unwarily fell into the trap set for him by some persons calling themselves "legal advisers:" a set of fellows, who would do what Judas is fabled to have done, namely, sell Jesus Christ for thirty pieces of silver. Verily, if any human tabernacles "*ought* to be damned," these are they. Why, up to the very night before trial, Robinson emphatically assured me, that no earthly consideration would induce him to put in a plea of guilty. Judge then, sir, if you can, my horrid astonishment, when he pleaded "Guilty to the first and second charges, with the exception of the second article in the first charge"—that is, pleaded guilty to the atrocious charge of *wickedly and feloniously vilifying, aspersing, et cet.*, the holy scriptures, and the christian religion. Nay, more, by that plea, he admitted his intention in vending the objectionable works, was to corrupt the morals of her majesty's lieges—for on the indictment's face, he stood charged with those monstrous crimes. So astounded was I, by this extraordinary proceeding, that I could scarce credit my own ears, and thought with Byron :

Nothing so true as not to trust the senses,

but having recovered a little from the intoxicating influence of astonishment, I remembered the other line :

But then, what are your other evidences ?

and speedily composed myself into a belief that Robinson had pleaded guilty to the *marrow* of an indictment which, rather than do, he had told me twelve hours before, he would part with his best limb. That he was sincere when he said so, allow me again to express my conviction—but, when in court, the poor fellow lost heart, and the legal *gentlemen* before alluded to literally *badgered* him into the adoption of that miserable line of policy which cannot fail to disgust every individual with any pretensions to intelligence and honourable feeling. Robinson's case was undoubtedly a peculiar, and peculiarly unfortunate, one, but having, as I have had substantial reason to think, taken a false position, "in ignorance, and not in cunning," the least his friends had a right

to expect of him was, a line of conduct calculated to redeem his partially compromised character, and raise him up instead of lowering him still lower in popular estimation. At any cost, he should have pleaded not guilty to the charge of wickedly and feloniously corrupting the morals of her majesty's lieges, by the sale of books called blasphemous. As to some of the books charged in the indictment as *obscene*, he might, and, indeed, ought to have pleaded guilty of selling them, at the same time expressing (as he has often done to me) his sorrow for having, in any way, aided their circulation. Books of the sort referred to, are sold at an enormous profit, and only for that reason can people be found reckless enough to publish them. I *must* agree with the Lord Justice Clerk, that *such* works, "If not sold with the deliberate intention of corrupting the moral principles of those to whom they were addressed, were so, from the base motive of gain," and my resolve is never to ally myself, directly or indirectly, with any publisher, who lends himself to so despicable a traffic. I cannot pretend to speak now with any confidence about Robinson, but should he outlive his severe imprisonment, I do not think he will ever again so much as suffer a book *properly* obscene to enter his shop. Bitter is the lesson he has received. May he fully profit by it—may it teach him the wicked folly of mixing up purity and impurity. May it stamp upon the tablet of his memory, in characters ineffaceable, the glorious truth, that, even in courts of injustice, honesty is the best policy. He has seen that Paterson, who had taken pains to make himself obnoxious to authority—who insulted, as well as defied it—who, moreover, preached atheism, and defended it in open court—was, after all, only adjudged to suffer imprisonment three months longer than himself, notwithstanding a plea of guilty, and the pitiful pleadings of an unprincipled counsel. As to the plea, the Lord Justice Clerk declared "It could not operate with the court to the extent of altering the punishment in this case"—a declaration which must have been most mortifying to Robinson, who had been led by his counsel to expect that the plea of guilty could, and would, operate favourably with the court. Not only did this "learned" counsel deceive his client in this particular, but had the effrontery to "Disavow, in the most explicit manner, all concurrence in, and sympathy with, the *very offensive crimes* charged against that individual." Plague take such *counselling*, say I. If Mr. McNeil calls this style of pleading beneficial to his client, what on earth could damage him ? Oh god ! if there is a god, deliver me from lawyers—and poor Robinson has ample cause to say

the like, night and morning, for the coming twelve months. But decidedly the ugliest feature to be found in the whole face of this ugly business, is the cool falsehood Robinson *allowed* his counsel to call truth, "in mitigation of punishment." This was the worst part of a bad business.

Mr. McNeil observed, "There was nothing he could say which would entitle the prisoner to expect the court to look with leniency on the crime with which he had been charged, but one or two circumstances." Now, Mr. Editor, one of the two circumstances was, "That he did not stand in the position of a person who boldly denied his guilt," the other, oh, shade of Regulus! that "He was not a party to the composition of them, or of any portion of them; *and, moreover, that he ceased to vend, or have in his possession, any of the books, as soon as the authorities interfered to challenge their contents!*" at the statement of which circumstance the judges pricked up their ears, to the manifest disconcertion of their wigs; but I *could*, and Robinson *should*, have told them that so much of the statement as I have italicised, *is not true*, for he vended, and of course had in his possession, copies of all the books cited in the indictment as blasphemous up to the day of trial. Whether Robinson did or did not instruct his counsel to state so barefaced a falsehood, I am unable to say, but I must needs presume that he *did*.

That the judges were considerably mollified by it is certain. The Lord Justice Clerk spoke of *the lie* as "a circumstance most satisfactory for the court to learn," and it is probable that had it not been told, Robinson would have received a severer sentence than Paterson. "Gutter hole" politicians, who make all the virtues do homage at the altar of what they call *expediency*, may applaud such a mode of *doing* the judges, they may admire the *prudence* that suggested so safe a policy, but for my own part, Mr. Editor, I see nothing either to admire or applaud in it, on the contrary, I despise and abhor such policy. It is unprincipled, therefore I despise, it is pernicious, therefore I abhor, it. Had Robinson acted upon *my* advice he would have been unencumbered by the assistance of lawyers, he would have pleaded guilty *only* to such portions of the indictment as were in a moral, as well as technical, sense *relevant*. Finally, he would not himself have spoken falsely, nor allowed any one else to do it for him, *in order to escape punishment*. By taking the course that I from the first proposed to him, he might have been condemned to suffer eighteen, instead of twelve, months' imprisonment. What then? Is character worth nothing? Is it not worth paying for in the shape of six months, or even six years'

imprisonment? Some men have estimated character at a much higher rate, and, in conclusion, sir, I will observe that it is specially incumbent on those who make a decided stand against the errors and evils of religion to hold fast by character, for *that* and *that only*, is their *anchor of safety*.

I am, Mr. Editor, yours very sincerely,

CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

Glasgow, 34, Kent-street,

Nov. 11th, 1843.

OUR PAST AND FUTURE.

THE history of our party and of its organ, the *Oracle*, is fraught with interest and instruction. Without self-glorification, or magnifying the efforts of the ultra *movement* party, it may be affirmed that our progress has been identified with that of freedom and liberty, in its fullest signification. This is said with a full appreciation of the breadth of the assertion. I have so thorough a contempt for the vague generalities of the pseudo liberty-lovers, both religious and political, as to regard one humble and honest effort worth all the high-sounding common-places that have tickled the ears of the present generation. The history of the *Oracle* and its associations presents a series of such efforts. Not a single active exertion has been made with the pen, the tongue, or the purse, without a beneficial result to the cause of truth. In the worst cases, those even in which our dearest sympathies and affections have been most rudely and violently assaulted, in which the friend, the sister, the parent, the companion of our bosom, have been snatched away to listen to the malignant taunts of christian judges, or endure degradations and petty tyrannies from christian gaolers—in these extreme instances of individual suffering, the cause in which we have been engaged has advanced towards its triumph. From the blood of the martyrs, say the godly, have sprung forth the seeds of the church. With tenfold more strength have germinated the seeds of truth, further and wider have been published the principles of liberty. More than all things besides, for immediate and obvious results, are the spirit of malignity, the thirst of domination, and the atrocious acts of cruelty which are proved to be the invariable concomitants of god-worship.

The theological exposures of this little half-sheet have undeceived and liberated many from a debasing thralldom, but the self-exposure of the bigots has most largely contributed to disgust and alienate the least god-led of their own party.

The realisation of our most cherished objects would be cut off, and our most ardent aspirations for the future would be extinguished, should the completion of the present

volume of the *Oracle* not be followed up by the establishment of another equally powerful and fearless advocate.

Something more than the mere continuance of our agitation and its organ is now demanded. If our capacities increase with our growth and strengthen with our strength, so do our wants. To remain stationary is impossible, we must advance or retrograde. Our position is strong without precedent, yet to maintain it we must make renewed exertions and fresh sacrifices.

The god-influence must be shaken beyond our present sphere of action, our out-spoken allies must be more effectually defended and supported, we must be brought more fully into contact with the intelligent and the honest of all classes. An advocate should now appear to reach the homes and hearths of all who are open to the affections and sympathies of our common nature. An organ should be established to speak plainly to all who are approachable by reason. A wider diffusion of our sentiments, a more extensive dissemination of the principles of free discussion, a stronger and more efficient association for self-protection are essential.

"THE MOVEMENT," a journal of theology, morals, and politics—organ of the Anti-Persecution Union, and record of progress—has been projected with these views and objects. With such an amount of support as the atheists and republicans can readily afford, access may be obtained to the lovers of liberty in general. With Mr. Holyoake to conduct the *Movement*, a sufficient guarantee is afforded as to principles and style to our past friends, and it depends on them mainly, in the first instance, whether the undertaking will be sufficiently sustained to advertise and otherwise publish it to the intelligent of all sects, parties, and classes.

I have taken measures to enable me, after a long, and I need hardly add, a compulsory recess, to co-operate in rendering our periodical worthy the support of all sincere reformers. The old contributors to the *Oracle* will be retained in our service, and some new allies will be enlisted. It was in contemplation to bring out a sheet, instead of a half-sheet, weekly, as more accordant with the extent of our desires. Such an extension of space would have accorded better with the extent of our plans, and our estimate of the wants of the liberal world. An anxiety to carry out the undertaking to an honourable conclusion has finally determined us as to form and size. Occasional additional half-sheets may be issued should press of important matter require it. In price, which is seen to be higher than before, we have been guided, after mature and careful consideration, by all the friends and supporters of the *Oracle* with whom we have been able to communicate.

M. Q. R.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS CHRISTIANISED,

According to the New Jew Book,

Wherein the undutiful son gives the *lie* direct to his father.

I. Thou shalt have three gods—father, son, and holy-ghost.

II. Thou shalt make to thyself the likeness of a man nailed upon a cross, pigeons, mother, child, old men, myself, papa, and mamma, riding on clouds: thou shalt *worship* and bow down to them as thou didst to me on earth.

III. Thou shalt take more oaths than any other nation, or religion, curse and swear, as I and my father did in our wrath, and take my name in vain, or never speak truth, as I never did.

IV. Remember that thou work the seventh day on the Sabbath, and rest the first day of the week in honour of me.

V. Hate your father and your mother, for my sake, or else you will go to hell.

VI. Thou shalt worship a father who murdered his son, and myself who committed suicide, and allowed myself, and incited others, to be put to death; murder for my sake, as Peter attempted in cutting off the ear of the officer on my command, and do as all true christians in doing their god good service have done, when they murdered each other wholesale and retail.

VII. You may commit adultery, if you think people are not better than yourself in other respects, and have no right to judge you, you may live with half-a-dozen women, girls of the town, maids and men's wives, if you are not caught in the fact. Thus I preached and practised when on earth, and with this view of the law celibacy gives more freedom.

VIII. You may follow no industry, and take bread when you are hungry, allow no virtue to any man if he won't give you all his money, you may steal donkeys, serve the purposes of a swell-mob by creating a riot, destroying property, and threatening life.

IX. You may bear false witness against your neighbours and damn them to eternal hell—never mind the sense of words, or meaning of things, witness to one thing at one time, another at another, the consequences must fall on those who are made not to understand, and you may lie with impunity against nature, against morality, and against god.

X. All things belong on earth to the faithful and much more will they have in heaven; Herod's steward's wife, the maid, and public prostitute, were not only coveted but had by me. I had no need, but I monopolized two donkeys for my own riding. Christians have murdered those of another faith, stolen their property, and appropriated to them-

selves the tenth of all men's goods. Well done thou good and faithful servants! They have not hid their talents under napkins, they have taken more than coveted. The former commandments were but the words, the new ones are the living examples of your lord and master upon earth, and without writing them upon the heart no doubt you all practise them.

(Signed) JESUS,

And addressed to all christian-polytheists, idolators, swearers, sabbath-breakers, disobedient children, murderers, robbers, false witnesses, covetous. Proved passim in the words and works of Jesus and the history of his holy religion.

DISCUSSION ON THE QUESTION "IS BELIEF IN A DEITY OF ANY KIND MORALLY BENE- FICIAL," AT BRANCH A 1.

Fourth Night.

MR. SNELL wished to correct an error in last *Oracle*. The attributes he admitted as debasing and degrading, were those "falsely" ascribed to the deity.—Mr. Puddeford, too, it appears, had admitted his willingness to speak without giving offence, providing the new moral world would accord him a more courteous hearing than heretofore.

MR. RYALL resumed the debate, by observing that the question, like all others, was one of comparison, good or bad in its influence upon human conduct—man had, in his ignorance, invented and employed words to express his feelings, which, in course of time, became disused and obsolete. Such would be the end of the words god and religion—he believed every idea in the mind to have its type in nature, but the belief in an intelligent god he believed to be caused by a morbid manifestation of the brain, or the result of ratiocination run mad, and every consequence of such belief morbid, unhealthy, monstrous. He would at once discard the words super, sub, or un-natural, as not belonging to the question—morals related to man, as a natural being, living in communication with his fellows—but the god-idea had often led man to anchoritism, had led him from his brother man into solitude, where his life was spent, without regard to his fellows or his own healthy existence, but according to the dictates of an unhealthy imagination. Some had defined god to be all-in-all—this was ridiculous, and in itself contradictory, and placed him (Mr. R.) in rather a strange position, being god and yet denying god. Many philosophers had endeavoured to trace the god-idea to its source—some had ascribed it to hope, some to fear, but most to ignorance. The bible, or series of tracts so called, had always enjoined obedience, rather than inquiry, and submission

to human authority rather than that self-respect which would give the best stability to human society. In all theocracies men have been bound hand and foot to a religious despotism—some few have even pretended to be in communication with the deity, and the commands issued by them to the people have been of the most demoralising character, inasmuch as man was to hold but a subordinate place in his own estimation, in short, to be a very slave to a word of three letters.

MR. LOSKI advocated his favourite doctrine of pantheism, as a better remedy for moral evil than atheism. Mr. Emerson, in America, and the members of the university of Paris were pantheists, in short, it was becoming the prevailing religion of the continent and America. The French had passed through the ordeal of atheism for years—the religion, and, at the same time, the scourge of France—and having no illuminating influence, had at length brought that country under a strictly military despotism. With regard to the words "all-in-all," he would use the phrase in reference to god, as Shakspeare had in reference to men: "Take him for all in all, we shall not look upon his like again." The last speaker had called the bible a compound of lies, imposition, and scandal—but had, at the same time, admitted some good in it. Why, all christians were ready to admit much grossness and immorality in it, according to our present notions, and it must be a clever book, inasmuch as atheists say it will afford texts for all parties and all purposes. Mr. L. concluded by observing that youth was beset by illusions, and atheism was one of them.

MR. ROSE was glad to hear of pantheism, and would be glad to hear more—believed it would be the religion of the future—said atheism had no binding principle, and would like to bring about a *real* belief in a god, inasmuch as idolatrous ceremonials had led to false and degraded notions of the supreme being.

MR. PRATT would ask Mr. Ryall if the religious belief of such men as Locke, Newton, and Paley, was a diseased manifestation of the mind—were they monomaniacs upon this and upon no other subject? It had also been said that the bible inculcated blind obedience—does not the book of nature even do that? Do not horses, birds, and other animals, follow a leader in their excursions? It had been said that excess always accompanied religion, either gluttony on the one hand, or self-mortification on the other. Why, even without religion, men will run into excess, as witness, the Ham Common socialists, who suffer their hair and beards to grow, as being in accordance with nature. In conclusion, he would say that the cloak of religion was often worn by those unworthy of it.

Mr. McCULLOUGH thought, in reference to what had fallen from Mr. Loski, that mature age was not always exempt from folly, nor youth at all times deceived by illusion. He (Mr. L.) had said of god, we should never look upon his like again, he sincerely hoped not—he would ask Mr. L. if things were worse now in France than prior to the revolution? the horrors of which event were not brought about by atheists, but by god-believers. As to the social mischief of god-belief. Mr. M'C. would refer to the recent police-case in Dublin, of the white quakers, who, in their zeal in god's service, refused to obey human laws, until a god-offender had been given up to them for condign punishment.

Mr. NEW would caution the atheists upon the hazard of disbelieving a god and a future state—they might lose an eye, an ear, or a limb, and still live and live well, but they had got but one soul and that immortal. He would have them look through nature up to nature's god, and not as now believe the soul extinct, and trace their carcasses only through their changes from clay to grass, to flesh, to milk, and finally into a lady's tea-cup, and then rest contented. He would have them trace as well the destiny of mind, before they yielded their belief in a god and a future state.

Mr. Savage adjourned.

C. D.

PROGRESS.—An animated discussion took place in the Coffee Room, on the subsequent Sunday morning, having for its object, or probable result, the substitution of the words nature and morality, for the words god and religion, in the school and the connexions of the branch.—Adjourned.

PUBLIC MEETING IN MANCHESTER.

THE following resolutions were passed at a public meeting, held in the Hall of Science, Manchester, on Tuesday, Nov. 7, Mrs. E. H. Martin in the chair:

Resolved 1st. That, in the opinion of this meeting, fear is the worst motive to action, and punishment is in itself an evil: that opinions are the results of capacity and circumstances, and that the free publication of all opinions is the only way to destroy error.

2nd. That prosecution for the imaginary crime of blasphemy is, above all other punishments, a senseless and cruel infliction, failing in its objects and producing unqualified injury to individuals and governments.

3rd. That it is incumbent upon every lover of progress to use his purse, his voice, and his general influence, to support the victims of persecution for opinions, whenever and wherever found, and this meeting do hereby approve of the establishment of an Anti-Persecution Union to guard the sacred right of free thought and utterance.

A FEW HINTS TO THE WEAK IN PRACTICE.

It is common, in the present day, to hear some persons say, "We are atheists in principle"—and others, "We are socialists in principle," et cet. And yet, after all, if we examine closely the practice of these very men, we find them not only departing from the truth of their declarations, but their conduct forwarding the cause of preistcraft and superstition, and endangering that of liberty and truth. Such men as these are not atheists, and should this be read by them, let them halt and consider—what am I doing? principle and practice must agree. If atheism is bad, why embrace it?—if it is good, carry it out to the letter. It is an old phrase of the Jew-book, that the fearful are ranked with unbelievers. I should call fearful atheists god-almighty defenders. These are times in which there must be no shirking, atheists should be more staunch and determined to carry out the practice fully. Not quibbling with those who, to promote a public good go a step beyond what such nice feelings will admit of. The rapid progress of atheistical principles with good practice has made tyrants tremble in their capitals, and christianity, in all its damnable forms, must finally fall before it. Cold-blanketism is most uncalled for. If ever the propagation of our principles was important, it is now, and must, with the boldness of a Southwell, Holyoake, and Paterson, obtain the triumph we are seeking. The time is not far distant when all systems shall only be continued from their real merit, and the professing atheist, with all other professors merely, will be condemned, as I have before stated. To such I would say, consider your ways and be wise—be *factotum* atheists, and, as Paterson has it, all will yet be well.

T. B.

SONNET TO THOS. PATERSON,

Upon his second conviction for blasphemy.

What, Paterson! have god-almighty's fools
Again tripped up thy heels, and laid thee
sprawling

In christian dungeon-filth? while they
are calling

With hate's envenom'd breath—delusion's
tools!—

Upon their crime-creating monster-god
To bless their efforts in his *holy* cause.

What to their hell-hot zeal are *human* laws,
Or *human happiness*? on both they've trod;
To serve a phantom of their own seared
brain,

Called from its stagnant nothingness—a
thing

Of horror, crime, remorselessness, and pain—

A fiend of idiot imagining—

The aggregated vices of mankind

Impersonated, named, ADORED, enshrined!

M. A. L.

To the Editor of the Oracle of Reason.

SIR.—I was sorry to learn from Thomas Paterson's letter in No. 98 of the *Oracle*, that the "*respectable*" mania had extended to Edinburgh, and I regret that any one professing a desire for liberty of conscience should use such an expression as "Let them fight their own battles," in reference to one who is persecuted for the sale of their own works. If this is to be the rule of action let it be fully carried out—let the Anti-Persecution Union be immediately dissolved—let Messrs. Robinson, Finlay, and McNeil be thrown upon their own resources, but never again assume the name or character of friends of liberty. If this be done, the oppressors will have all they desire—the destruction of all other rights will follow the destruction of this—let this be crushed and the opinions of all other parties are in danger—and we shall soon have a return to the glorious old times of church authority, and the convincing arguments of the stake and the faggot will again be triumphant. The assurance that Paterson had "lost the confidence of the friends" for that which should have increased their confidence was indeed contemptible, and as an intimation that he must not expect bail it was cowardly. If we allow Paterson to be crushed after all he has done for the cause, it will be a death-blow to atheism for the present generation. I hope for the honour of the cause that these are the expressions of but one of the "friends." If we sacrifice Paterson, then there is no safety for any. We have more to fear from cowardice and treachery among ourselves than from the severest opposition of our enemies. The one is open and may be prepared for, but the other is insidious and cannot be guarded against. From such friends I should decidedly withdraw all confidence as allies, though not support as victims of persecution. If we consign the man who has perilled his life in our cause to the tender mercies of christianity, farewell to all hopes of liberty. But I hope better things, and in that hope I remain, yours truly,

CHAS. JOHN SAVAGE.

27, Mape-street, Bethnal Green,
Oct. 27, 1843.

THE "MOVEMENT."

ALL interested in the success of the forthcoming periodical, to succeed the *Oracle*, will please to send their names and addresses to G. J. Holyoake or M. Q. Ryall, 40, Holywell-street.

NOTICE.

Mr. James Millor, Hunter's Lane, Yorkshire-street, Oldham, is appointed a collector of the Anti-Persecution Union.

G. J. H. Sec.

JUSTICE.—The idea of justice is one of the glories of human nature. Man perceived it at once, but he perceived it as a flash of lightning in the dark night of primitive passions; he sees it unceasingly violated, and at every moment effaced by the necessary disorder of passions and contrary interests. What has been pleased to be called natural society, is only a state of war, where reigns the right of the strongest, and where justice is never introduced but to be trodden under foot by the passions. But at length this idea strikes also the mind of man; and it responds so completely to his most intimate feelings, that by degrees it becomes an imperious necessity to realise it, and as before he had formed a new nature upon the idea of the useful, so in the same manner here, in the place of primitive society, where all was confounded, he creates a new society upon the basis of a single idea, that of justice. Established justice, is the government of the state. The mission of the state is by force to make justice respected, according to the idea inherent in that of justice, to wit, that injustice must not only be repressed but punished. Thence, gentlemen, a new society, civil and political society, which is no less than justice in action, by means of the legal order that the state represents. The state does not take any account of the infinite variety of human elements which were at issue in the confusion and chaos of natural society, it does not embrace the entire man; it considers him only in relation to the idea of just and unjust, as capable of being trammelled or putting others in trammel, whether by fraud or by violence, in the exercise of their free and voluntary activity as far as this activity is in itself inoffensive. Thence all duties and all legal rights. The only legal right is to be respected in the peaceable exercise of liberty; the only duty (I mean civilly) is to respect the liberty of others. Justice is only that, justice is the maintenance of reciprocal liberty. The state, therefore, does not limit liberty, as some say, it develops and assures it. Moreover, in primitive society, all men are necessarily unequal, by their wants, their feelings, their physical, intellectual, and moral faculties—but before the state, who considers men only as persons, as free beings, all men are equal, liberty being equal itself, and the unique type and only measure of equality, which out of that is only a resemblance, that is to say, a difference. Equality, the fundamental attribute of liberty, makes then with this same liberty, the basis of legal order and of this political world, which in the relations of men among themselves, is a creation of the genius of man, more wonderful than the actual world of industry, relatively to the primitive world of nature.

—Victor Cousin.

THE ATHEIST'S GRAVE.

I SAUNTERED among the church-yard dead,
 On a sunny sabbath day;
 And I marked one grave, where the sexton
 That an atheist's ashes lay. [said
 A headstone pointed the lonely spot,
 Inscribed with his age and name;
 But other memorial was there not
 To draw either praise or blame.
 Yet the daisy, there, was as fresh in hue,
 The elms did as lightly wave;
 And the spring-tide grass as greenly grew,
 As over a christian's grave.
 And I marked that the sunbeams, through
 Fell as brightly on the sod, [the trees,
 As though its inmate had been of these
 Who lived in the faith of a god.
 And over my mind reflections came
 Of a new and startling kind;
 'Twas whispered within me that man may
 Where nature no fault will find. [blame,
 The bigot's curse, from the Gothic pile;
 On the sceptical few may fall,
 But nature extends, with a mother's smile,
 Her pity and love to all.

THE MISAPPLICATION OF SPECULATION.—Speculation may be defined the tendency of cultivated thought to look for an explanation of the phenomena of the universe. The legitimate exercise of this tendency is frequently violated by many of our public speakers at the social institutions—who, instead of drawing the line of demarcation between what is real and what is fiction, intermix one with the other with such outrageous liberty, that it is impossible for persons to be otherwise than deceived by them. This course is pursued, too, by a great many who pride themselves upon their rationality. What has reason to do with such conduct? Reason would prompt us to exhibit knowledge as knowledge, and faith as faith. Were our so-called rationalists to discuss in this manner, they would be rationalists indeed, not, as now, nominalists. Such trifling with humanity must be checked by atheists. We must insist upon a reason being given for all blending of the real with the imagined. When this is done, we shall find men and women depend upon themselves, not trembling and crouching beneath idiotical faiths. Faith in the unknown is destructive to reason. I am convinced that there would be no faiths in unknowns, unless we misapplied speculation. From the little which has been said, I am convinced that were we all to insist that speculation be treated as speculation, and reality as reality, we should very soon become reasonable beings. Soon see through the trade of the priests—leave off dungeoning one another for opinion's sake—cause religion to retreat to the back-ground of ignorance whence it came—and finally bring about a better state of things.—G. HAMMOND.

SUBSCRIPTIONS.

For the London Anti-Persecution Union.

On Mr. Holyoake's announcement of the fate of Paterson at Rotunda.

Mr. Friend	£0	1	0
Mr. J. Thorne	0	3	0
S. B., second subscription ..	0	2	6
Several friends	0	6	11

A few Hand-Loom Weavers, Dalton, per Mr. Watson 0 2 0
 Per Mr. J. Cook, Infidel Repository, Ipswich.

Mr. and Mrs. Cook,	0	1	6
Mr. James Jervis	0	1	0
Several friends	0	2	6

Per Mr. McCullough, Collector 20.
 Collection in John-street Coffee Rooms 0 7 5½
 Per Mr. Gurney.

A few friends, Long Buckley, Northamptonshire	0	6	0
Per Mr. Drummond, Preston ..	0	2	0

Per Mr. W. H. Holyoake, Leicester.
 Mr. Samuel—no relation of Samuel the prophet 0 1 0

Messrs. Read, Hall, Bentley, and Clifton	0	4	0
Several friends	0	3	9

A friend, Coventry, 1st annual sub.	0	10	0
Mr. S. B. Richardson, Coventry ..	0	2	0
Mr. Finiely, do.	0	1	0
Several friends	0	7	4

The friends of Ashton-Under-Line per Mr John Hindle 0 10 .3
 Per Mr. Uttly, Burnley.

Mr. H. Uttly	0	2	6
Messrs. Edwards, Dyson, Dickenson, Greenwood and Butterworth	0	5	0

Several friends	0	3	0
Per Mr. Johnson, London, collector 15	0	10	0

G. J. H., Sec.

LATEST INTELLIGENCE.

ON the eve of going to press, I have learnt that on Friday morning last Paterson was sent to the Penitentiary, at Perth. While in Edinburgh he was seen by one of the friends, who states that Paterson looked well in his new dress, and appeared to be in excellent spirits. A public meeting of the friends of liberty of opinion was held in the Large Waterloo Room, on Tuesday evening, Nov. 21, at which Messrs. Peddie, Southwell, Jeffery, Tankard, Cumming, and M'Rae were to attend. I learn with great satisfaction that the chartists, the only useful movement body in the country, are entirely with our friends in their opposition to the "powers that be"—a full attendance of the chartist body was anticipated at the public meeting, a report of which will appear in next O.—ED.

Printed and Published by WILLIAM CHILTON, No. 40 Holywell-street, Strand, London. Saturday, Nov. 25, 1843.

THE
ORACLE OF REASON:
Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

“FAITH’S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE.”

First Editor—Charles Southwell, imprisoned for twelve months and fined £100, for Blasphemy in No. 4.

Second Editor—George Jacob Holyoake, imprisoned for six months, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.

Third Editor—Thomas Paterson, imprisoned for one month, for Blasphemous Placards, in London.

Vendors—George Adams, imprisoned for one month for selling No. 25, in Cheltenham; and

Harriet Adams, his wife, arrested for selling No. 4, in the same town.

No. 103.]

EDITED BY WILLIAM CHILTON.

[PRICE 1D.]

THE SCOTCH GOD WAR.

**ROBINSON AND PATERSON.
PUBLIC MEETING, EDINBURGH.**

A PUBLIC meeting of the inhabitants of Edinburgh was held in the Waterloo Rooms there, on the evening of Tuesday, Nov. 21, to sympathise with Messrs. Paterson and Robinson, the victims of persecution—to memorialise her majesty’s government for their release from prison—and to petition the House of Commons for the abrogation of the laws under which they have been convicted. During the whole evening, the rain fell in torrents, and the committee of the “union” had almost resolved to postpone the meeting; but the zeal of Scotchmen was not to be subdued, even though cold water were thrown upon it from the “window of heaven.” At the hour announced, the body of the room was comfortably filled, and, in a short time, the audience had swelled to eleven or twelve hundred. Mr. ROBERT PEDDIE was unanimously voted to the chair.

The Chairman stated the objects of the meeting. Had much pleasure, mingled with pain, in presiding on that occasion—*pleasure* to see so many of his fellow-citizens met to denounce persecution, *pain* that, in the nineteenth century, it should be necessary to do so. No country more loudly denounced persecution than this, and yet no country had so much reason to be ashamed of its persecuting spirit. He then briefly alluded to the vile enactments of the Scotch Kirk, after it became the state religion, all tending to the coercion of conscience, and alleged that no state religion ever existed *without* persecution—it was its *essence*, its very *spirit*. Complained of christians paying missionaries to cram their dogmas down the throats of others, and not allowing those others the same liberty—putting down any such attempt by the interposition of the secular arm. They trampled upon every principle of liberty. He, for one, was determined to resist such interference. The chairman concluded an excellent speech, which was interrupted occasionally by loud applause, by calling upon the secretary to

read the address of the Scottish Anti-Persecution Union.

Mr. HENRY JEFFERY then read the following

Address of the “Scottish Anti-Persecution Union.”

THE severe sentences passed upon Messrs. Paterson and Robinson, of Edinburgh, for the publication of works advocating unpopular opinions on religious topics (and therefore accounted blasphemous), must convince every reasonable individual that we do not possess, in Great Britain, that liberty of which we so often boast. Inquiry is checked, the press is fettered, and trammels are placed upon the human mind. To aid strenuously in the removal of these iniquitous restrictions, is therefore the duty of every man and woman who professes to be a lover of the truth, and a friend to mental emancipation.

It seems strange, that in a country calling itself protestant, there should be any necessity for bringing forward reasons against persecution for opinion’s sake; but the late proceedings in the High Court of Justiciary, show that such necessity really exists. Subjoined are a few of the considerations pointing out the injustice and absurdity of the prosecutions referred to:

1. Blasphemy, if a crime at all, is undiscoverable by any fallible human tribunal. It is a thing of chronology and geography. Jesus Christ was a blasphemer, *according to the Jews*—Dr. Kalley, the presbyterian protestant, is now imprisoned in Madeira for being a blasphemer, *according to the roman catholic authorities there*—and Messrs. Paterson and Robinson are now incarcerated in Edinburgh, for being blasphemers, *according to the authorities here*. In short, *every man who denies all religions but his own, is an infidel and blasphemer to every religion except the one which he professes*.

2. If one sect or body of men have a right to persecute, *all* have the same right. Hence, were the principle and practice carried out, society would be involved in continual confusion, cruelties, and atrocities.

3. Society is *further* injured, by the repression of mental activity: *corruption* being the certain effect of stagnation.

4. Such prosecutions are detrimental to morality, inasmuch as they tend to produce deceit and hypocrisy. When men are punished for speaking their sincere convictions, do not the punishers practically direct them to be hypocrites and liars?

5. If religion be divine truth, it must be triumphant over the attacks of infidels without the aid of physical force. Indeed, christians often boast, that the most unanswerable defences of christianity have been instigated by the writings of sceptics. Truth asks no assistance from dungeon bars, or policemen's batons.

6. Infidelity, or any false doctrines, or unjust vituperations of truth, can be refuted by argument and exposure *only*.

7. It is glaringly inconsistent in protestants to punish men for being, like themselves, *protestors* against what they conceive to be error. By so doing they practically countenance the popish presumption of assuming infallibility.

8. History shows that persecution has rarely been successful in producing the end contemplated. In these days, when, thanks to the progress of liberalism, extirpation by fire and sword cannot be resorted to, the interference of courts of law with the expression of opinion can *never* suppress them.

9. Curiosity, zeal, and sympathy, are excited, and the demand for the prosecuted works is increased.

10. Belief, or disbelief, being dependent on *evidence*, and not on the *will*, the bolts, bars, and walls of a prison cell, are not the agents calculated to effect conversion.

11. The supporters of oppression and error are foes of a free press, because *it* is a foe to *them*. A *free press* is the palladium of liberty—a promoter of virtue—a mighty contributor to enlightenment, and the best means of eliciting truth.

Injustice is seldom without an excuse, however flimsy; and therefore many persons defend prosecutions, because, in *their opinion*, the parties prosecuted used strong language, harsh expressions, and ridicule, and because mere *abuse* of christianity can only be answered by punishment, not by argument. To this we reply by asking, what right one man has to dictate to another the style he shall use? Is it fair for *one side* in a controversy to be the sole arbiters of what is argument in a debate, and then proceed to inflict pains and penalties for what, upon their dictum alone, is deemed villification? Strong language is often necessary to express the truth. Jesus Christ spoke of some men as being "serpents," and "generations of vipers," with other villifying expressions of a like description. Luther, Calvin, Knox, and other great reformers, have not thought it proper to oppose fatal errors in the polite terms of drawing-room

phraseology, but they have spoken from the heart in withering denunciation of the corruptions they have combatted. If any doctrines are *false*, we ought to call them *false*; if they are *ridiculous*, we ought to *ridicule* them; and if *contemptible*, we should hold them up to *contempt*. Strong impressions give rise to strong expressions, and it is a violation of fair discussion to prevent any man from using the terms adequate to the imparting of his ideas.

It is untrue to assert that unfounded abuse and unfair ridicule cannot be answered. Fallacious arguments can be refuted, and unjust villification may be exposed. If an individual erroneously endeavour to bring religion into contempt, let his charges be proven false; but if he be persecuted for his opinion upon the subject, we are led to suspect his charges to be true. Away, then, with this paltry pretence—this sophistical attempt to countenance bigotry and intolerance.

It is easy to perceive that opinions must be palpably *true*, or palpably *false*, or their character in this respect must be *doubtful*. If evidently *true*, they ought not to be prosecuted; if palpably *false*, they can do no mischief, and prosecution is useless; if *doubtful*, no authority has a right to decide by force, and suppress them by violence. Persecution has no plea left; it stands before us in its naked deformity.

The formation of a Scottish Anti-Persecution Union, is the first fruit of the Scotch prosecutions. That union is made up of individual professors of almost every kind of opinion—political, religious, and irreligious. It is formed for the sole purpose of setting free the tongue and the press; therefore, all who are persecuted for expressing, or otherwise publishing their opinions, will have a legitimate claim to its support.

The Scottish Anti-Persecution Union will neither be a party engine, nor struggle for party or sectarian purposes. It will neither know nor care anything about opinions peculiar to individuals. If they are persecuted, the union will recognise and aid them, simply because they *are* persecuted.

Let all professing liberality and enlightenment, unite then to forward these important objects. Assist with your purse or your personal exertions—do your duty—provide the means of agitation, and, ere long, the land will be purged of persecution, and in truth shall we be enabled to say "We are free." By order of the Committee,

HENRY JEFFERY, *Secretary*.

Letters, money orders, &c., to be addressed to Mr. H. Jeffery, Secretary, at W. and H. Robinson's, 11, Greenside-street, Edinburgh.

Mr. CHARLES SOUTHWELL moved the first resolution, "That all penal restrictions

upon the tongue or the press, to prevent the utterance or publication of opinion, are detrimental to truth and morality and to the welfare of society, and that all laws fettering freedom of expression should be immediately abrogated." Mr. S. agreed with that bright luminary Sir William Jones, that there could be no happiness for man without virtue, no virtue without freedom, and no freedom without liberty of the press. The resolution in his hand contended for liberty to speak and write freely; and, to attain that glorious liberty, if it were necessary to make sacrifices, he, for one, was prepared to run all risks. Lord Justice Clerk talks too fast if he prate about infidelity in Scotland having received its death-blow at his hands. As Paterson had said on the floor of the High Court of Justiciary, "Where one shop existed *before*, there will be three or four called into existence *after*, the prosecution." The victims were accused of bringing christianity into contempt. Christianity required no such assistance; it brought itself into contempt. Religion could not bear a critical examination, and she called in the arm of flesh to defend her. Truth asked not the assistance of civil power; she courted examination, for, in the language of Milton, continued Mr. S., "Truth can no more be soiled by human touch, than a sunbeam." The more it is tried in the furnace, like gold, the more pure will truth become. Mr. S. commented in a very amusing style upon an article in the *Witness* newspaper, headed "The Atheist Paterson." He then read, from the *Weekly Dispatch*, a portion of Publicola's letter on "Toleration in our Universities," in which that vigorous writer asks, who can define blasphemy? Mr. S. pointed out the impossibility of the so-called crime of blasphemy, and was warmly applauded during his observations. He adverted to a paragraph in *Bell's Life*, touching the cases of P. and R., in which the editor expresses most pious horror of these cases. It was really laughable to read such twaddle in a paper whose very existence was dependent upon the demoralisation of mankind. Mr. S. concluded amidst general applause.

Mr. CUMMING had much pleasure in seconding the resolution. As a christian he was truly ashamed to stand where he did. Religion did not sanction persecution for opinion's sake. The scriptures told us to "prove all things." Considered that prosecutions such as those against Paterson and Robinson were opposed to reason, justice, and revelation. All but atheists had the liberty of expressing and printing their opinions. This ought not to be. Would wish to see the principle of free inquiry universal.

The Chairman having put the resolution, a

Mr. STARK rose to move an amendment.

Mr. Southwell had said that christians brought themselves into contempt. This was partly true and partly false. Christians sometimes were inconsistent, but the bible had nothing to do with that. Sorry that although Paterson's shop was shut, another had been opened (tremendous cheering). He begged to move as an amendment, "That this meeting approves of the sentences passed upon Messrs. Paterson and Robinson."

A Mr. MURRAY rose to second the amendment. They were assembled to petition for the abrogation of laws about which they knew nothing. He insisted on having the laws read.

The CHAIRMAN.—I did not think it necessary to bring to this meeting a library of statute books. Two persons have been convicted under laws which the lord advocate says are extant. You have that authority, the fact of the conviction, and the speech of the Lord Justice Clerk in proof of the existence of those laws. All these JUSTIFY the present meeting.

Mr. MURRAY said that P. and R. had been imprisoned for breaking the law, and not for infidelity. Had much pleasure in seconding the amendment.

Mr. TANKARD considered the amendment to be out of place. The resolution took no notice either of P. or R.'s case. It contained the assertion of a great principle. Did not approve the opinions of Paterson, but contended for his right to publish them. Had the indicted works been of a demoralising character, would not have attended that meeting. Asked his fellow-christians present to follow the example of Christ, "persecute not, though ye be persecuted;" "when ye are smitten on the one cheek turn ye the other also." Christians were doing more harm to their cause than infidelity itself.

Mr. HOOD ascended the platform and said that he concurred in what had fallen from the previous speaker. He was a christian, and would devote his life to the cause. Disapproved of Paterson's prosecution as much as he did of his opinions. He would say "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Christianity needed no crutches. It should stand or fall. Hoped to see the day when all laws checking opinion should be expunged from the statute book.

The Chairman then put the amendment, when 10 hands (including the mover and seconder) were held up in its favour, amid the laughter of the meeting. The resolution was then put and carried amid tremendous applause.

Mr. JEFFERY rose to move the second resolution, which was to the effect, "That the imprisonment of Thomas Paterson and

Henry Robinson, booksellers, of this city, for vending works containing denials of the truth of the prevalent religious doctrines, is impolitic, unjust, and intolerant." Allusion had been made to the charges of obscenity in Robinson's case. The guilt imputed to Robinson on that head, did not properly lie at his door. The so-called obscene works had been, and were still, *advertised* in the London prints by the publishers of them, and Robinson had always striven to bring down the sale of such books. Robinson was a *general* bookseller, and had never encouraged that branch of his trade. The plates seized in his shop were all of a *classical* character—engravings of subjects from the Napoleon Gallery at Paris, and other picture galleries. They were not obscene. To those who looked through dirty eyes they might be. Persecutors were always anxious to hide their *real* intentions. The charge of obscenity was a mere cloak for the other; and Dr. Candlish had said, in that very room, some weeks ago, that the authorities of Maderia would have trumped up any other charge against Dr. Kalley, but the one of blasphemy, to screen themselves from merited odium. Happy to say, however, that Paterson's case was one of pure blasphemy. He never would have been directly, or indirectly, instrumental in diffusing among the people, anything that could demoralise—his object was the elevation, not the degradation, of the people. Sure no one there would aid in the propagation of obscenity. Glad to find christian and infidel meeting on one common ground. Happy, too, that the chartists made common cause with the atheists on that occasion. Mr. Jeffery concluded a most effective speech, amidst great applause, by moving the adoption of the resolution.

Mr. JOHN GRANT, as a christian, had much pleasure in seconding the resolution. He entirely disapproved Paterson's *manner* of opposing christianity, but contended for the right of every man to do as he thought proper. The Jews of old were more tolerant than modern christians. Jesus Christ, when a mere stripling, had been permitted to discuss with them in their synagogue, and they heard him with patience. Modern churchmen were not remarkable for their toleration in that respect. Prosecutions were opposed to the spirit of christianity. It addressed itself to the understanding of man. Would again say, that he had much pleasure, as a christian, in seconding the resolution.

The resolution was then put from the chair. Mr. Murray brought forward his old amendment, but no one seconding his motion, the resolution was carried enthusiastically by the meeting.

The hour being late, Mr. TANKARD would

simply move the adoption of the petition and memorial, then read, seconded by Mr. SERGEANT, of Manchester. Carried unanimously.

Mr. JEFFERY would move that Thomas Duncombe, Esq., be requested to present the petition to the House of Commons.

Seconded by Mr. SUTHERLAND. Carried unanimously.

After a vote of thanks to the chair, the meeting separated. "Boss."

To the Editor of the Oracle of Reason.

Edinburgh, Nov. 21, 1843.

DEAR FRIEND.—Having heard, on the 18th current, that Paterson was shortly to be removed to the new prison at Perth, and wishing to see him previous to his departure, on the 16th I called at Calton Gaol, and sent a note to the governor, requesting an interview with the "Man Paterson" (who has had the honour of being made a second time, by pious, meek, non-judging, forgiving christians, the defendant against the plaintiff god), the answer returned was that at half-past three, p.m., I would be permitted an interview; I accordingly went at the time appointed, and in passing the entrance of the gaol, saw the governor, who showed me into a room, and sent for our honest friend; we shook hands, and had a short conversation on ordinary topics of interest (the governor was present all the time), he looked well, and was cheerful, had on a new prison dress, but had not his head shaved, nor had he been breaking stones, as falsely stated in the newspapers, the servile, dishonest editors of which love to feed the revengeful feelings of the christians, who more than love to persecute those who dare to advocate opinions at variance with their own religious dogmas; he requested me to write to W.C. and W.J.B., and asked me to send him "Chambers's Information for the People," provided the meek, loving christians would permit him to read, when in Perth Gaol. We then parted, he to his cell, appointed for him by those who make themselves equal to god-almighty, as Christ says, at John viii. 15, "*Ye judge after the flesh, I judge no man;*" and the apostle says, at Romans xii. 19, "*Vengeance is mine, I will repay saith the lord;*" again, at Luke vi. 37, "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not and ye shall not be condemned: forgive and ye shall be forgiven:" again, at James ii. 4, "Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?"

And his judges also make themselves sinless, as Christ says, at John viii. 7, "*He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.*"

"And Jesus said unto her, neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more."

John. xiii. 35, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, *if ye have love one to another.*"—Where are his disciples? and echo answers, where?

Romans xii. 17, "RECOMPENCE TONON MAN EVIL FOR EVIL."

That informer, the very pious Captain George Robert Douglas Henington Mackenzie, of Northumberland-street, Edinburgh, a man-butcher by trade, hired to murder and rob poor Indians, was a witness against Paterson, and exhibited that revengeful spirit, in accordance with his view of christianity—can he believe in the above extracts, or the following out of the new testament?

Matt. v. 44, "BUT I SAY UNTO YOU LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, BLESS THEM THAT CURSE YOU, DO GOOD TO THEM THAT HATE YOU." Matt. vi. 15, "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your father forgive your trespasses."

The conduct of (the righteous men in their own conceits) his judges and accusers, renders them infidels, *they having acted in direct variance to the precepts of Jesus.*

The christian captain showed that want of moral courage, so conspicuous in those who have injured another—shunning Paterson, and refusing to converse with him, after placing him in the hands of the law harpies, instead of, as at II. Timothy ii. 25, "*In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.*"

Luke iii. 14, "And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, and what shall we do? and he said unto them do violence to no man." If they did violence to no man, there would be no use for soldiers, but the hypocrite Mackenzie, like the rest of Paterson's accusers and judges, possesses an Indian-rubber conscience, stretching at convenience; as for the lawyers, we don't look to them for a conscience at all—their trade being supported solely by vice and misery, and is a by-word over the face of the earth; even Christ denounces them most emphatically, as at Luke xi. 46, "*Woe unto you also, ye LAWYERS! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne.*"

Verse 52, "*Woe unto you LAWYERS! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye enter not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.*"

The justice clerk said that christianity was the law of the land; *it was originally a judge-made law, which has never been confirmed by act of parliament*; Jeremy Bentham's admirable answer to its being the law of the land, is as follows:

"If christianity is part and parcel of the law of the land, disobedience to any of the precepts contained in the Sermon on the Mount is an indictable offence."

The coolness with which christians swear

in a court of law, in face of the emphatic words against that vice, is truly blasphemous, for we find at Matt. v. 34-5-7, "But I say unto you *swear not*; neither by heaven, for it is god's throne, nor by the earth, for it is his footstool: but let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay, for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."

James v. 12, "But above all things, my brethren, *swear not*," etc.

The Lord Justice Clerk said that a person refusing to take an oath when the court required it, was liable to imprisonment; thus making the laws of man *more to be obeyed than the laws of god.* The passages contained in the new testament inculcating the love, the forgiveness, and the non-judging of our fellow-men are too numerous and in too plain language for Paterson's judges and accusers to get over, *they know too well that revenge was their feeling, and gratified it must be, even at the risk of "eternal damnation."*

The roman catholics will not allow the bible to be read by any persons but their own priests. The puseyites say it is wrong to let the people read that volume, and the unitarians say it is an uninspired work. However, persecution will never make Paterson believe that book to be true (when did it ever make a true convert?); but he, like his judges and accusers, may become very moral by studying that excellent book for youth, the old testament. Wishing prosperity to the cause of free thinking, and wishing you health and happiness,

I remain, yours faithfully, A. T.

P. S. I much doubt whether his cruel christian keepers will even let him write, as I expected a letter ere this. A. T.

Manifesto of Matilda Roalfe, Bookseller, 105, Nicolson-street, to the people of Edinburgh.

THE serio-comic farce lately enacted in your High Court of Justiciary, must destroy all dubiousness as to the fact, that to sell, or cause to be sold, books calculated to bring the christian religion into contempt, *is felony in law.*

The Lord Justice Clerk, the chief performer on that occasion, laid down the startling principle, that whatever set of religious opinions the legislature may, in its wisdom, think fit to establish, none must dare to impugn, ridicule, or otherwise bring into contempt those opinions on pain of being "severely punished."

Such is the law of Scotland, as expounded by its Lord Justice Clerk; such is the law in "a land of civil and religious liberty;" such is the law among a people who rejoice in the name of christians; and such is the law *I am resolved not to obey.*

Let the *multitude* listen with respectful dread to the priestly voice potential, always raised in deprecation of truth and rational liberty; let *them* believe that such poor miserable sinners as themselves have nothing to do with the laws but to obey them; *I* will not be a partner in their degradation, but resist any and every law which makes sincerity a crime when *practised by unbelievers*.

Your Lord Justice Clerk, with a wisdom worthy of Daniel himself, assures us, that all are free to believe as they please, as though 'twere possible for us to help believing some propositions, any more than we can help disbelieving others; or as though legislation could reach our thoughts, and say even to the humblest members of society, "thus far shalt thou *think* and no farther." To talk about the law declaring every man's faith to be free, is to prattle downright nonsense, our faith being determined by *evidence*, not by *law*.

And surely it is a scandal to the christian name, that christianity is no otherwise to be bolstered up than by "judge-made laws," and those who cannot help thinking it a pernicious fable, no otherwise be answered than by murderous punishments.

If christians have reason on their side—if their religion is in very truth built upon a rock, why so much alarm? Why should they who lay claim to the sword of the spirit, disgrace themselves by wielding the sword of the magistrate?

That religion cannot be divine which is incapable of sustaining itself against the most insidious and violent assaults of error. It has become proverbial in all civilised nations, that "error alone needs artificial support, truth can stand by itself."

If christianity is fabulous and demoralising, as many excellent, as well as learned, men have thought, it *should* be brought into contempt, laws to the contrary, notwithstanding. Good laws, all the *good* will respect—but none save those in whom false education has quenched every lofty and generous emotion, will tamely tolerate the tyranny of *bad* laws. "If," said the noble Emmet, "our laws are beneath the people, we should not degrade the people to the level of the laws, but pull up the laws to the level of the people."

The persons who call themselves Scotland's Free Church, have avowed their determination to set the laws of men at defiance, whenever those laws are at variance with what they choose to call the laws of god. Now, I pretend to no knowledge of the laws of god, nor of the laws of any incomprehensible deity worshipped here or elsewhere, but I lay claim to *some* knowledge of the *law of reason*, and my resolve is by that to square my actions.

All human law which is in harmony with

the law of reason, it has ever been, and, I trust, ever will be, my pride to respect and obey; but that law, whether it be called christian or any other name, which is an outrage upon human reason, I never will voluntarily obey.

The law touching liberty of publication, and of speech, as laid down by Justice Clerk Hope, in the case of Thomas Paterson, I proclaim to be an *insult* to, as well *outrage* upon, human reason—a law that would not for an instant be tolerated in any country worthy to be called free, and assuredly will not in this, so soon as a majority of its inhabitants shall be relieved from the shackles imposed upon them by the crafty teachers of a religion, every fragment of which has been borrowed — without acknowledgment — from the mythological fables of antiquity.

Our laws prohibit the discussion of christianity, or what amounts to the same thing, render severely punishable the crime of bringing it into contempt, because the laws were framed by priests, or the tools of priests, who found it, as they still find it, far more convenient to *silence* than to *answer* infidels, to *cast them into prison*, than to *convince their understandings*; and to keep the vulgar in subjection by stuffing their heads with FUDGE, has been, with scarce an exception, the policy of those arch enslavers of intellect, who, according to St. Paul, are ministers of god for good! Take my word for it, truth-seeking reader, that the supporters of a law which treats as *feloniously criminal* the honest supporters of *any* opinions, are, at the best, persons who agree with the pious bishop Synesius, "That as darkness suits the blear-eyed better than light, falsehood suits the vulgar better than truth." MYSTERY-MEN, who laugh in their sleeves, at that public goose whose feathers they so mercilessly pluck, ever and anon saying (*sotto voce*) with Pope Leo X., "What riches this fable of Christ has brought us." To aid in destroying the influence of *such* men, by bringing into contempt the fabulous trash they palm upon the ever-credulous, ever-deceived multitude, as genuine religion, is the great, the *sole* object of my ambition. I neither hope nor fear anything from authority, and am resolved to supply the public with works of a controversial and philosophical character whether such works do or do not bring into contempt the *holy scriptures* or the *christian religion*.

LIVERPOOL.—On Sunday evening, Nov. 19, Mr. J. C. Farn delivered a lecture on behalf of Mr. Paterson. The subscriptions given will be found in the list of the Anti-Persecution Union. It is hoped that this generous example will be followed.

IS THERE A GOD?

HUME might practise the doctrine of reserve in atheism, and keep back his opinion, but Diderot and D'Holbach were atheists, glorying in the profession. Brougham, however, will have it, that Hume was an atheist, but that the above authors of the *System of Nature* were deists. In Brougham's discourse on *Natural Theology*, he says, "There occurs everywhere in this book (the *System of Nature*) a vague and mysterious idea of a force or living power belonging to matter, and almost a deification of this force, utterly unintelligible: but in a hater of deity—a derider of all gods—quite marvellous. The passage in which this idea is most strikingly announced is the 11th chapter of part II., where he is answering the position that there is no such thing as an atheist in the world. 'If by atheist they mean a man who denies the existence of an inherent power in nature, and without which nature cannot be conceived, and if it is to this motive power that they give the name of god, there exists no atheists, and the word by which they are designated announces only madmen.' Can any one doubt, that after rejecting all reasonable and consistent notions of a deity, this writer had really made unto himself other gods, bowed down before them, and worshipped them? For what is the force inherent in matter? And what is 'nature' and the essence of nature, or that thing 'without which nature cannot be conceived?'"

As to the assertion of a vague and mysterious idea of a force or *living power*, and its deification in the *Systeme de la Nature*, such an idea appears to me to have no place but in the brain of the god-maker Brougham. In the mention of power we have the word made to stand for Mr. Mackintosh's deity, but with this difference, Mr. Mackintosh assumes a moral power, gives it human attributes, and makes a god after the fashion of all creators, who assuming god made this world and men, immediately prove that they have made god after their own image. Now, by the power or force in the *System of Nature* Brougham might have very well seen is meant a property or a quality of a thing or things, an abstract idea. Because we acknowledge heat, cold, childhood as the qualities of objects, we do not deify them. The pagans did impersonate all such abstractions, but because we acknowledge these effects as well as Brougham, neither he nor we can be said "To have made unto ourselves other gods and bowed down before them or worshipped them." That motion is the universal property of matter we cannot deny to the experience of our senses, but we do not stick up any symbol of it and adore it. To deny matter and its properties, would be to be without our senses, and its proof our non-ex-

istence to question it. It is only the verbiage of insanity that can write "But, we have, in truth, already shown that matter, as far as the present controversy is concerned, offers no more precise idea to our contemplation than mind or spirit, and that its existence and qualities rest on less conclusive evidence than do those of mind." Disprove matter, and the mind or spirit resulting from it, which is proved by, and exercised on, material objects, is gone. Prove that we ourselves and the world do not exist, and it will be unnecessary to discuss the question of the existence of a deity. W. J. B.

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SCRAPS.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS.—The punishing wits enhances their authority, and a forbidden writing is thought to be a certain spark of truth that flies up in the faces of them who seek to tread it out.—*Bacon.*

DIFFERENCE OF OPINION.—What is the life of man? Is it not to shift from side to side—from sorrow to sorrow?—to button-up one cause of vexation, and unbutton another? (Lawrence Sterne, *the christian.*)—When I reflect, as I frequently do, upon the felicity I have enjoyed, I sometimes say to myself, that, were the offer made to me, I would engage to run again, from beginning to end, the same career of life. All I would ask, should be the privilege of an author, to correct, in a second edition, certain errors of the first. (Benjamin Franklin, *the infidel.*)—Reader! which, think you, was the happier man?

As it is the chief concern of wise men to retrench the evils of life by the reasonings of philosophy, it is the employment of fools to multiply them by the sentiments of superstition.—*Addison.*

Truth is omnipotent, and free discussion is her glorious arena.—*George Combe.*

PROGRESS.

THE WHITECHAPEL BRANCH.—On Sunday evening Mr. Holyoake lectured at this institution, and at the conclusion, at the request of several of the members, introduced the case of Mr. Paterson. A feeling of great friendliness was manifested, and the subscriptions then given, together with what was in the hands of the collectors, Mr. Edwards and Mr. Marshall, amounted to £114s. 8d. It has lately been made a point of dramatic condolence that this branch has been discussing atheism—it may therefore be gratifying to know that the attention they have given to such disquisitions has neither diminished their sense of justice, their love of humanity, nor their cordial and substantial hatred of oppression.

EDINBURGH.—In a letter to the secretary of the London Anti-Persecution Union, Mr. Finlay quaintly says, relative to the recent prosecutions, "I wonder as much at being let alone as I did at being meddled with—and the best reason I can allege for their dropping me is the good one that they ought never to have taken me up. From the day on which I was bailed out, until after the trials of Robinson and Paterson, I had not the slightest communication, either directly

or indirectly, with any of the public authorities relative to my prosecution, nor any other subject. But since the trials I have, at the suggestion of my friends, applied to the sheriff, the lord advocate, the crown agent, and the fiscal, for the restoration of my seized property, but as yet I have not obtained any redress."

SUBSCRIPTIONS,

For the London Anti-Persecution Union.

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Sunday Evening, Nov. 19.

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Printed and Published by WILLIAM CHILTON, No. 40 Holywell-street, Strand, London.
Saturday, Dec. 2, 1843.

